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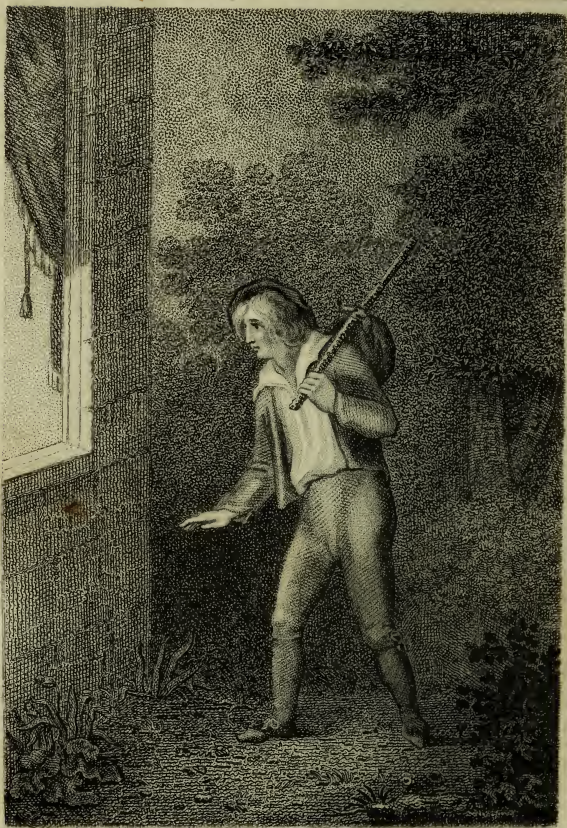
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The Gift
of
M^r Daniel
to
Master Sewell
for
good Conduct
at Xmas
1818

INTERESTING TALES.

ISIDORE.



"Here I am." — Page 24.

INTERESTING TALES:

CONSISTING OF

ISIDORE,
ARTHUR,
THE CLEAR-SIGHTED BLIND MAN,
ROBERT,
AND THE HOGSHEAD.

Translated from the French,

BY A LADY.

London:

Printed for Vernor and Hood, in the Poultry; and
J. Harris, Corner of St. Paul's Church-Yard.

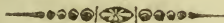
1805.

Printed by J. & L. Hodson, Cross-Street, Hatton Garden.

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TALES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.



ISIDORE.

THERE lived in a small village, near the town of * * *, a man whose name was Bernard; he had once been clerk in a counting house, but now endeavoured to exist upon his very narrow income, in a neat, but small house, situated at the entrance of the village, where he spent his time agreeably enough, between the care of his little garden, and of his son Isidore.

B

Bernard

Gen. rec. Ray 19 Nov. 49 Webster

Bernard was a widower, and Isidore his only child. He was a very amiable, well disposed young man, possessed of a thousand good qualities, but simple as a baby; and at the age of eighteen, was as modest and reserved as any young woman in the neighbourhood.

Obliged to regulate his expences with the strictest economy, Bernard had no connection with any of the inhabitants of the town; the little society he cultivated was with a few old husbandmen, as poor as himself, and like him also, good and virtuous.

He could not afford to give masters to his son, but he taught him to read, to write, and to cast accounts; and if the young Isidore
was

was not extremely learned, he was at least a good son, a good friend, and would have sacrificed his life to serve his father.

One day Bernard received a letter, which appeared to interest him prodigiously; he shut himself up several days in his room, and at length acquainted Isidore with the necessity he was under of taking a journey, which would occasion him an absence of many months.—“ You are so little acquainted, my son,” added he, “ with either mankind, or business, that uncertain as I am of what may be my lot, I cannot communicate to you the motive of my journey, besides I know it would disturb your peace, and for no purpose; for, if the object for which I

am going to absent myself, should not succeed, I should be the cause of useless regret and uneasiness to you. Remain then quietly at home, my dear Isidore, and take care of your little cottage; I have saved a few crowns, which you will find in that bureau; take them, live moderately, and wait my return without uneasiness.—I recommend to you particularly, *very* particularly, not to visit any person but our ordinary friends, Thomas and tall Simon, who are good and worthy people. Pray remember this, my son, fly from all society, it is the ruin of the morals and principles of the indigent.—Adieu my dear Isidore.

Isidore wept, embraced his father, and followed him with his eyes

as long as he could distinguish him. —When he found himself alone, though he was tall, strong, and eighteen years of age, he thought himself lost and forsaken; going into his house it appeared to him quite a desert; gloomy, and melancholy as a prison; and his garden had lost all its beauty, it was dry, and mean. —In a word, nothing could please him, because he could not see his father.

For some days poor Isidore gave himself up to sadness, but recollecting that he should either perish with *ennui*, or fall sick if he continued to stay alone in this manner, he resolved to cultivate the acquaintance of Bernard's friends: tall Simon was his favourite; he was a worthy

old husbandman, who lived beside him, and, with his daughter Annette, who was all his consolation, was happy and contented, though in a situation little above indigence.

Annette was sixteen years of age; she was a brunette, pretty, lively, and well made; but she was simple and innocent, nearly to as great a degree as Isidore.

The young man saw her every day with increasing pleasure; he passed his whole time with tall Simon and his Annette.—He assisted her father in his rustic employments, and helped Annette to milk her cows, to churn, and, in short, in all the little occupations which fell to her share. Extreme sensibility formed the basis of Isidore's character,

ter, and he could not spend so much of his time in the company of this amiable girl, without feeling in his heart, before it was long, a real and sincere love for her. Though simple and even silly, he perceived that he was in love; but being too timid to avow his passion, he became gloomy, and silent.

Annette, who sighed in secret for Isidore, observed this change in his manner, and fearing he was ill, spoke to him of it one day, as they were playing together, like two children, in a little wood near the cottage. — “Monsieur Isidore,” said she to him, with great simplicity, “are you unwell.” — “Non, Mademoiselle Annette, why do you think so?” — “Because for some time past you are

very much altered, you are pale, gloomy, and are no longer gay and cheerful as you used to be.”—“ Ah! Mademoiselle Annette, it is because—because—I think you are very handsome,” “ And does your thinking me handsome make you ill?”—“ Oh! Mademoiselle Annette it is only my heart which is ill.”—“ Your heart! and what does it wish for?”—“ Oh! nothing Mademoiselle Annette.”—“ Nothing? Monsieur Isidore! it seems to me, when my heart is sad, it is always for something.”—“ Pshaw, does anything ever ail *your* heart?”—“ Just like yours.”—Just like mine!—it is very singular: Listen Mademoiselle Annette; it seems to me, that if your heart and mine understood each other a little better,

better, than would no longer be ill."

—"To be sure! they would recover immediately, but how is it to be done?"—"Ah! for example, if Mademoiselle Annette would only say she distinguished me from the other young men, I would answer, that I think her charming."—"Dear Monsieur Isidore, it would cost me very little to say that."—"What, Mademoiselle Annette?"—"Why, that I think you are very agreeable."——

Well, Mademoiselle Annette, I must tell you then, that you are the prettiest young woman, and the most worthy of being beloved, that I ever saw in my life."—"I am very glad to hear it."—"Ah! Mademoiselle Annette this is a beginning of convalescence, I already breathe more

freely.”—“ So do I.”—“ Let us compleat the cure, Mademoiselle Annette ; I love you, do you love me also?—“ Oh ! with all my heart.”—“ I am cured, Mademoiselle Annette.”—“ I am much better, Monsieur Isidore.”—“ Well, I think we agree in the principal point.”—“ Oh ! certainly.”—“ Now ” — “ What now?”—“ Why now—will it be agreeable to you that I should become your husband?”—“ Why yes, if it will be agreeable to you that I should be your wife.”—“ It would compleat my happiness.”—“ And as to myself it is my only wish.”—“ Very well, very well Mademoiselle Annette, see now what it is to speak out ! I am quite relieved ; and now Mademoiselle Annette, we will only wait
my

my father's return and then we will be married."—"Will he consent Monsieur Isidore?—my father is only a poor husbandman."—"He is a good man, who desires nothing so much as my happiness, but he has nothing to give me at all, and the question is, Mademoiselle Annette, whether *your* father will accept of a son-in-law without fortune."—"That will never prevent my father from consenting, he is so good; and then you know he is your father's most intimate friend!—But let us not mention it yet, let us wait Monsieur Bernard's return."—"Enough, Mademoiselle Annette; but in the mean time we may talk together of our mutual affections." "Oh! every day."—"Every day, morning and
B 6 evening,

evening, and in the course of the day?"—"Yes, every moment."—"Oh! how happy I am! will you give me leave from this day to call you my little wife?"—"With all my heart, Monsieur Isidore, upon condition that I may call you my little husband."—"Oh! certainly, and let us seal the bargain with a kiss."—"Oh! no Monsieur Isidore, my little husband I mean,—not till your father comes home, Adieu! husband."—"Adieu my little wife."

Isidore returned to his house light and cheerful; he felt as if he had been relieved of a burthen; and from the time he had so freely made the soft confession of his love, he saw his charming Annette every day, and entertained her continually with assurances of constancy.

Three

Three months however were passed away and Bernard did not appear; he had not even written to his son in the whole time, and his silence began to make him extremely uneasy, who longed for his father's return, both as a dutiful son and a tender lover.

Isidore had a friend of his own age, who was the son of farmer Thomas. William was a greater simpleton even than Isidore, but no less virtuous; he was not ignorant of the reciprocal affection which subsisted between Annette and Isidore, and the latter conversed with him continually on the subject, so that he passed his days in the most delicious manner, divided between love and friendship. Bernard however did
not

not write, and that circumstance alone interrupted Isidore's felicity.

At length he received a letter, it was on a Monday, and his father wrote him that he should be at home the Sunday following; he had seven days to wait, and these seven days appeared as so many ages to poor Isidore. They slipped away, however, and on the evening of the day preceding that which was to bring home Bernard, he had an affecting conversation with Annette and his friend William: they settled a number of projects of happiness, and Isidore said, that as soon as he became the husband of Annette, he would work in the fields as tall Simon did. William proposed to unite his destiny with that of his friends,
and

and that the profits of their labour should be in common amongst them. All their plans agreed on and cemented by a solemn oath, they returned each to his dwelling, and passed the night in peaceful and unbroken slumber.

The next morning Isidore went out to meet his father; breathless with impatience, every person he saw coming towards him, he thought it must be him; he ran to meet the traveller, but was continually disappointed; at length he perceived five or six persons, who appeared to be carrying something extremely heavy; and it was not long before he saw that it was a hurdle: he went up to it, but, oh! heaven! what were his feelings when he perceived his

his father stretched upon it, bathed in his blood, and without the least movement.

“We found this unfortunate man,” said one of those who helped to carry the hurdle, very near this place; where he had fallen from his horse, and is, I greatly fear, mortally wounded; some papers we found in his pocket have made known to us the place of his abode, and we are carrying him home.

“It is my father,” said Isidore, in the most doleful accents, and throwing himself upon the bleeding body, “Oh my dear father! have I so anxiously wished for your return, to meet you in this dreadful state!”—The men endeavoured to console him, but he was deaf to all they said, and

and the melancholy train arriving soon after at the house of the dying Bernard, Thomas, William, tall Simon, all the neighbours, hastened to offer their assistance, and the tender hearted Annette was not the last to sympathize with Isidore.

A surgeon was immediately sent for, who said that poor Bernard had not two hours to live; he soon after opened his eyes, and recovered his speech. On looking round him he perceived his son drowned in tears, and making a sign to him to come near him, "My son," said he, "I have formed great projects with regard to you—but death—a vicious horse has thrown me with violence upon a heap of stones—I have but a very short time to live, I must make the
most

most of it ;—you will find a sealed letter in my pocket which I had written before my accident, it is addressed to Monsieur Ambrose, steward of the Castle of Courlange, which is twelve leagues from hence ; as soon as I am laid in my grave, dispose of the trifles we are possessed of, and pay what is due for rent, to my landlord.—You will then go with this letter of recommendation in your hand, and present yourself to Monsieur Ambrose, who will give you a good place,—O! certainly I may say a good place—therefore follow exactly the last will of your father, my dear Isidore, and let nothing prevent the execution of it.”

Bernard fell again into a kind of stupor, and expired about an hour afterwards.

afterwards. What a terrible blow for poor Isidore.—He was carried to the house of Simon, who with Thomas, and some other of the neighbourhood, attended the burial of their deceased friend.—Annette in the mean time endeavoured to console Isidore;—but poor Annette no longer flattered herself with the hope of ever being his wife. She had heard the last words of Bernard.—Isidore is to quit the village, is to seek for a place; far, far, from Annette!—What a separation! What a cruel destiny.’—

Isidore always dutiful and submissive, sold his father’s effects, paid the rent of his house; and with a small bundle upon his shoulder, (it was all he had left) the letter for
Ambrose

Ambrose in his pocket ; his heart oppressed with grief, and his eyes swimming in tears, went to bid adieu to William and Annette.—“ Mademoiselle,” said he, “ whatever the place may be which my father has procured for me, I shall see you again ; I shall ask you of your father, who will certainly not refuse you to my wishes ; and we shall yet be happy.”— “ Never, Monsieur Isidore ! ”— “ What is the meaning of that melancholy presage ? —allow me, Mademoiselle Annette, to fulfil the wish of my father, and rest satisfied of my love and my constancy.”— “ Ah ! Monsieur Isidore, if you should grow rich ! ”— “ Rich ! me ! rich ! What an idea ! but, if it should be so, I swear to you, Mademoiselle
Annette,

Annette, I never will have any other wife but you, or any friend, but William; depend upon the assurance I give you both, and do not, by your doubts and sorrow, add to the pain I feel at leaving you; I am faint-hearted enough already, pray do not make me more so."

The three friends wept bitterly, but were at length obliged to part, and Isidore took the road which led towards the castle of Courlange. It was the Paris road, and passing through a wood he perceived a large heap of stones covered with blood; several persons stood round it, and he heard them say it was the place where the unfortunate traveller was thrown from his horse about a fortnight before.

Isidore

Isidore learned in this manner that he was on the spot where his poor father had met with the dreadful accident which terminated his days. He threw himself on his knees upon the stones, prayed to the Supreme Being for protection, and addressed his sighs and regrets to the shade of Bernard. Thus he passed the whole day in tears, and bitter reflections; and night began to draw her sable curtain round the world before he thought of continuing his journey.

At the end of the wood he observed a very pretty house, at no great distance; there were lights in some of the windows, and he heard a woman's voice, as he drew nearer to it: she was singing a ballad, and he heard very distinctly the burthen at
the

the end of each verse, which was as follows,—

My Isidore whom I adore,
Return, return my Isidore!

Isidore was so extremely ignorant and simple as to imagine that the lady must know him, and was calling him. Though he loved Annette, and determined to be always faithful to her, he could not help answering immediately, “Here I am!”—and knocked at the door. A servant opening it, asked him what he wanted.—“Your lady”—“My lady receives nobody at this late hour.”—“She has just called to me from the window.”—“O! that is a different case, come in.”

The servant conducted Isidore into the lady’s apartment, who was not
a little

a little surprised at being visited by a young man at such an hour. "Who do you want?" said she.—"Here I am," answered the simpleton. "He is certainly mad," exclaimed the lady. "Picard, shew the young man out directly, and pray never open the door after night; the house is very lonely, and there are so many idle fellows rambling about the country."—"Madam I am not an idle fellow; I only thought"—"Very well, go—go, friend."

Picard turned out Isidore, and the good young man continued his way, saying to himself, "Bless me, what wicked people there are in the world! they call others mad-men when they are crack-brained themselves.—It was worth while, to be sure,

sure, to call me, and dismiss me directly like a thief.

It would have been a difficult matter to have persuaded Isidore that the lady had not called him; however he walked on till day-break, when, seated under a large tree, he breakfasted very heartily, and then proceeded on his journey, reflecting on his dear Annette, and the friends he had left behind him.

Towards evening he perceived a very magnificent modern built house, surrounded by a park of immense extent. He enquired of the first person he met with, who it belonged to. "It is the Castle of Courlange," answered the man to whom he had addressed himself.—"Oh! it is, is it? so much the better," said he, "I am then at the end of my journey."

C

He

He examined the outside of the castle with great attention, saying to himself; "What sort of a figure am I going to make within these walls? recommended to a steward!—What place can he procure for me but that of a footman,—a footman! my father, indigent as he was, should not have reduced me to so servile a situation!—I should have preferred a thousand times to have followed the plough with tall Simon, and then I should not have been separated from Annette! However, since it was my father's choice I must conform myself to it, so footman let me be, and I will do the best I can to please my master."

The night was shut in when he arrived at the great gate, and when he knocked, he could not help reflecting
on

on his last night's adventure, and said, "I hope they will not play me the same trick here." "Who knocks so late," enquired a person from the inside, in a very rough voice.—"Open the gate, if you please, and I will tell you."—"Who do you want?"—"Monsieur Ambrose."—"Monsieur Ambrose? I am he; but Monsieur Ambrose does not open the door after night, to a pack of vagabonds; we have enough come here in the day time."

"See now," said Isidore to himself, "they shut the door in my face!" He did not lose his courage, however, but began to hollow to Monsieur Ambrose, intreating him to open the gate. "Open it," said he, "I bring you a letter from Monsieur Bernard."

c 2

nard.”—“ Ah! that is another matter: Why did not you say so before?”

Ambrose opened the gate: he was a well-looking, lusty man, but had an air of severity, and even harshness, which did not much please poor Isidore. He invited him, however, into his apartment, put on his spectacles, and taking the letter, sat down near the light, and read it with the utmost attention. It was a very long one, and Monsieur Ambrose was a slow reader; when he had finished it, with his spectacles still upon his nose, he examined our young man from head to foot, but with so much attention and so very seriously, that poor Isidore could not help trembling; his knees bent under him, and he was near fainting. Ambrose, who perceived his uneasiness, put his
hand

hand before his mouth, and appeared to stifle with difficulty the inclination he had to burst into a violent fit of laughter. This compleatly disconcerted Isidore, and he knew not which way to look, or what to do with himself.

Ambrose at length recovered his natural seriousness, and said to Isidore, with an air of great respect,—“I have been expecting you, Sir, with the utmost impatience, and I beg your pardon a thousand times, for having left you so long at the gate,—but in the country—after night—in short, it was for your sake, Sir, what I did. Will you condescend, Sir, to sup in this room, just this one evening?—to-morrow you will be served in a more becoming manner.”

Isidore concluded himself the laughing stock of Monsieur Am-

brose; and red and pale, by turns, scarcely able to support himself, he answered in the most awkward manner, "Certainly, Sir, you do me a great deal of honour."

Ambrose placed two wax lights on the table, and extinguished his lamp; he then brought forward a chair, and with the greatest respect request Isidore to be seated.—He then left the room, and our young man was no sooner alone, than, unable to contain himself,—“So!” exclaimed he,—“I perceive that Monsieur Ambrose has a mind to amuse himself at my expence: half an hour ago he shut the door in my face, and now he is overloading me with his ridiculous ceremony, and mean complaisance.—I’ll tell him of it, that I will.” Isidore however said nothing; he was by much too timid
and

and shame-faced to make any observations to Ambrose on the change in his behaviour; and his surprise redoubled, when, after waiting about an hour, he saw him enter the room, followed by two footmen, who after bowing to him respectfully, laid the cloth, and served up a very handsome supper. But they examined him attentively, and he perceived that they often turned their heads away, and smiled at each other.

Isidore desired Ambrose to sit down to supper with him; but Ambrose answered that he had no claim to such an honour.

Isidore disconcerted and embarrassed, astonished at the profound and respectful silence of these men, in spite of the hunger he felt, could not eat a morsel.—He rose from ta-

ble, no longer able to bear his situation; and surmounting his usual timidity, asked if he could speak a word in private to Ambrose. The servants retired, and Isidore addressed the steward in the following manner:—

“ I am ignorant, Sir, of what my father may have written to you, but I cannot help seeing that I am treated in this house with more ceremony than I either deserve or desire. Does he not recommend me to you, that you may procure me the place of a footman?” “ Of a footman!— you, Sir, a footman! ”—“ What place then did he mean, when he ordered me to come here ? ”—“ The first place, Sir,—the first place in this house is your’s.”—“ Oh ! yes to be sure ! you make a jest of me, because you think I am a poor simple boy.”—“ I should
be

be extremely unhappy, Sir, if you thought me capable of forming such an idea,—but, Sir, you are certainly fatigued, permit me to have the honour of conducting you to your chamber; to-morrow, Sir, you will visit the house: and “Is the master a good sort of a man?”—“You really make me laugh, Sir.—Yes, certainly he is an excellent man, and I hope he will always have reason to be satisfied with me.”—“You will present me then to-morrow morning?”—“Yes, Sir, certainly you will be presented—with every thing necessary.” “I shall be obliged to you.”

Ambrose took up the two wax lights, and walked on before Isidore, who, without paying any attention to him, thought within himself that if his master was as good as Monsieur Ambrose said he was, he would

speak of Annette to him, and that if he could but get a place for her also, just by him in the castle, he should be the happiest of men.

He followed Ambrose up the great stair-case, passed through several magnificent apartments, and at last into a bed-chamber decorated and furnished with the utmost taste and elegance, and Ambrose retired after shewing him his bed.

Isidore, more and more astonished, fancied that perhaps, the master was absent, and that Ambrose allowed him to sleep in his bed ; he spent the night very comfortably, and the next morning as soon as he was up, went down stairs in search of the steward, in the hope of clearing up what appeared to him so extraordinary.

He

He found five or six servants in the hall, who all bowed to him with the most profound respect, and one of them said to him, "Sir, will your honour have the goodness to keep me in your service?" Another said, "May I hope, Sir, for the honour of being your valet de chambre?"—a third,—“Sir, I was coach-man to your predecessor, I hope I shall be so happy as to keep my place.”—A fourth was advancing to speak, but Isidore bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Gentlemen this is too much!—When I come here to be your comrade, you should not treat me in this ironical manner, if my poor dear father was not dead, I would go back to him directly."—Is your father dead, Sir?" asked Ambrose.—“Yes, indeed, and almost suddenly.”

—" Good heaven! what a misfortune!—but, Sir, as you are heir to all he left, you become proprietor of this house."—" How?—what do you say?"—" You are not acquainted, Sir, with the motive of Monsieur Bernard's long absence from you, but I have the pleasure of informing you that it was to recover an unexpected fortune, and on his return he purchased this estate, and confided his papers, his money and other effects to my care.—" I intend," said he to me, " to surprise my son, by addressing him to you to procure a situation for him; you will be amused an instant by the perplexity he will be thrown into; for he will not have the most distant idea of my having sent him to Courlange to take possession of so valuable and charming

charming a property." This is what your father said to me at parting, and he repeated the same orders in the letter which you brought me yesterday."—"What!—I am,"—"You are in your own house, Sir, and your own master; condescend to follow me into your closet."

Isidore was so surprised that his head grew quite giddy; he, however followed Ambrose, who shewed him parchments, title-deeds, money, jewels, &c. &c. "Ah!" cried he, "Mademoiselle Annette, you shall share with me all that is here."—

Having recovered himself a little, he took possession of his house, his fine park and extensive property. Ambrose, whom he had every reason to look upon as a man of strict probity,

probity, advised him how to manage it, and as soon as he had given the necessary orders, and had got rid of all business relating to his estate, he wrote a long letter to Annette, begging her to prevail upon her father to bring her to see him; and that his friend William might also be of the party. He did not mention a word of his good fortune, or the rank he held at Courlange, and was delighted at the idea of surprising his friends in their turn. Ambrose was let into the secret.

From the moment Annette received the letter, she tormented her father without ceasing, to accompany her on a visit to Isidore. "We shall see him," said she, "the good young man! how glad I shall be!—I dare say he is steward or butler. Indeed, father,

ther,

ther, you owe this visit to the memory of your friend Bernard."

Tall Simon at length consented to go, and dressed himself in his best coat. Annette put on the gown she thought she looked best in, ribbons of Isidore's favorite colour, and a nosegay of the flowers she knew he liked best; and William took a nankeen jacket and pair of pantaloons out of his box, which he had never worn but once, at the fair in their village.

They began their journey gaily, in a little tilted cart, and arrived the second day at Courlange, where they were received by Ambrose.

Tall Simon asked for Monsieur Isidore. "Monsieur Isidore cannot be spoken with just now." "Perhaps he is busy with his master."—

—"Yes

—"Yes he is busy," "and the master of the house is going to be married? almost immediately."—"With a young person?" "A country girl; but very pretty." "So—well, but Monsieur Isidore?"—"You cannot possibly see him at this time; he desired me to receive you, and I am going to order some refreshments for you, after your journey."—He conducted them into a very handsome apartment, and left them.

The three villagers looked at each other, and were on the point of making some observations, when a female came into the room, bringing several very elegant articles of woman's dress, and placing them before Annette, "Those things are for you, Mademoiselle," said she.

A man

A man servant followed soon after, with men's cloaths of different sorts, saying, "These are for you, gentlemen."

They now began to stare at each other more than ever, they could not understand the meaning of what they saw; but Isidore appeared, and they forgot every thing else. He was dressed in the same simple cloaths he wore in his father's house, and flying into the arms of tall Simon and William, he embraced them with all his heart, and expressed to Annette, in the tenderest and most affectionate terms, the pleasure he felt at seeing her again.—
"But that's not enough," cried tall Simon, "tell us in the name of wonder, what is the meaning of the fine cloaths they have brought us."

"Oh!

“ Oh! Monsieur Simon, you do not know the master of the house; he wishes to see you, and it is he who makes you these presents.”—“ Monsieur de Courlange?”—“ Himself; he will positively see you.”

Isidore quitted his friends, and about an hour afterwards Ambrose came to fetch the travellers. “ Monsieur de Courlange expects you,” said he to them; and tall Simon stroking down his cravat, whilst William settled the bow of his handkerchief, and Annette put a little aside the natural curls of her auburn hair, that she might see Monsieur de Courlange the better, followed him immediately.

They were shewn into a charming drawing room, where the first which drew their attention was Isidore; but

but it was Isidore, dressed in the most elegant and costly clothing.—
“How! now! cried William, is this you my friend? but where is Monsieur de Courlange?”—“You see him before you my dear friends.”
—“What nonsense! do mind now how he jeers us; come tell us at once where is Monsieur.”

Ambrose assured them that Isidore was his master, and informed them of his good fortune: Simon and William were delighted, and congratulated him sincerely. Annette burst into tears.—“What is the matter dear Mademoiselle Annette,” cried Isidore. “Monsieur Isidore! you are going to be married then? this gentleman told us of it.”—“Yes, Mademoiselle Annette, I am soon to be married, with a young woman
I have

I have long loved, and who lives in your village." — Annette, though drowned in tears, let fall the corner of her apron, which she held in her hand, and fixing her eyes upon him, exclaimed, " Well, with one of our village? perhaps it is Theresa by the brook?"—" No Mademoiselle Annette,—no, fy! my heart and my eyes have more taste, my intended is called Annette Simon." Smiling through her tears, " not possible Monsieur Isidore," said she. " Very possible Mademoiselle Annette, if you will consent to it."—" Why with all *my* heart, unless my father" —" Stop, stop, interrupted Simon, my head's all in a whirligig, what does he say? that he has a mind to marry you?"—" Yes, father."—" Odsbodikins! I shall not be such a fool as to prevent him."

" Do

“Do you hear Monsieur Isidore? my father will not be such a fool as to prevent you.”—“Very well, Mademoiselle Annette,” answered Isidore, then we will be married this week, and I hope you will all stay here, and consider this house as your own.”

Isidore was now the happiest of human beings.—He married Annette; and Simon, whom he treated with all the affection and tenderness of a son, remained with them. He provided handsomely for William; and raised Ambrose to the place of his intendant. His prosperity never made him either despise or forget his old friends; and he was ever faithful both to love and friendship.

ARTHUR.

ARTHUR.

MONSIEUR Belard being returned to his native country, after an absence of fifteen years, was appointed by his fellow citizens mayor of a little town about twenty leagues from Paris; where, having some property, he had fixed his residence; and found in the society of his former friends and acquaintance, and in the quiet and rational manner in which he spent his time, so much happiness and comfort, that he felt no desire to quit his retirement for the noise and bustle of the world.

Returning one evening, accompanied by an old servant, from a friend's

friend's house, where he had dined, he was accosted in the street by a boy, who asked his charity in a humble and supplicating manner; but being occupied by different reflections, and displeased at the interruption, he refused him angrily; and the boy continuing to importune him, he called him an idle fellow, and threatened to have him taken up.

The boy left him muttering something between his teeth, to which Monsieur Belard, lost in thought, paid not the smallest attention; when his servant (François) said to him, "Dear me, Monsieur, you must be extremely absent, you who have so much humanity and feeling, to repulse that poor boy with such harshness."

“ Oh!

“ Oh!” answered he, “ he is no doubt one of those little vagabonds who are always teasing people for money.” “ I really think you are mistaken, Monsieur; he has such a fine figure, such a lofty air. Do you know what he said when you threatened to have him taken up? With a look full of vexation he murmured softly, “ *taken up! is that the language of a magistrate?*” and going a few steps further, he raised his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed,” “ Oh! God am I then forsaken by every human being!”—“ What! François, that youth said”—“ Yes, Monsieur, just what I tell you.”

“ He is in the right,—he has pointed out my duty to me. A magistrate should examine into the causes of the sufferings and distresses
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of the unfortunate, and relieve those who have deserved a better fate, whilst he punished the vicious.”—

“ This boy is not one of the latter sort, I am sure he is not. You have heard of him, Monsieur, I suppose.”—“ Me! not at all.” “ What have you not heard any one speak of young Arthur, whose history is an enigma to the whole town! he has been here about three months, and one would think he had dropped from the clouds, for no one knows where he came from, nor to whom he belongs. Poor, ragged, and dirty as he is, his handsome person, and fine open countenance interest all who see him; and his extraordinary understanding and talents prove the education which has been bestowed

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upon

upon him.—He talks and writes like an angel; indeed, Monsieur, he is quite a prodigy.”

“ But if this is the case; why does he ask alms?”—“ It is that which surprises every one, Monsieur; several of the inhabitants of our town would have taken him, and have placed him in a shop, as a sort of clerk, but he never would consent to it, and contents himself with what he can get by running on errands, or with the bit of bread he begs.” “ This proves very clearly, that he is a lazy fellow, who chuses to be idle.” “ Very far from it, Monsieur; every body praises him, he is so active, so honest, so gentle towards those who employ him, and as to work, nothing is too much for him; but when he is pressed to accept

cept a better situation, he says he has his reasons for acting as he does, and for remaining unknown." "It is very extraordinary!" "Very much so, Monsieur; I dare say he has some mystery locked up in his breast, which pains and oppresses him, for he weeps continually, and has often been found in the country leaning against a tree, shedding torrents of tears. This very morning I overheard him, down there by the great poplar. "Oh! my dear mother, cried he piteously, you are at rest, why is your unhappy child left to bewail your loss."—"Poor child!"—"The poor child is the name he is known by, they never call him by any other, and every body is interested in his welfare."—"I have wounded his poor little heart, Fran-

çois, I must go back and seek for him, and endeavour to discover his secret; what pleasure it would give me, if I could make him happy."

"Now, Monsieur, you speak like yourself; these are the sentiment I have always observed in you. Let us go back a little way; he is not far off, I dare say, for your harshness, (I beg your pardon, Monsieur, for making use of such an expression) will have hurt him, and we shall find him weeping and lamenting."

They returned the way they came, and François delighted at his master's determination, in a few minutes exclaimed, "There he is, Monsieur; did I not tell you so? there he sits weeping upon that stone."

Monsieur

Monsieur Belard went towards him; the young man saw him and was going to run away.—“Stay, my good boy,” said he, “do not let me frighten you; I have behaved ill to you; I am sensible of it, and am come to offer you all the reparation in my power.”

“Why Sir,” answered he, turning to Monsieur Belard, “Why do you add irony to your inhumanity?”—“Irony! you judge very ill of me. I never in my life sought to insult an unhappy person. You said just now, as you left me, *Is that the language of a magistrate?*—That exclamation has shewn me my duty, and penetrated me even to tears.—But tell me, my young friend, do you know me?”—“Yes, Sir, I know you are Monsieur de Belard, mayor

of this town.”—“ You know it, and yet unfortunate as you appear to be, you have never come to ask my protection, my assistance.”

“ Oh! Sir, who can protect me? in whom can I even place any confidence, when every one in power is leagued with my enemy against me?”—“ Your enemy! so young, and have an enemy! What can you have done to him?”—“ It is not my wrongs, Sir,—but why should I tell you, have I not sworn to hide the dreadful secret in my breast for ever?”

“ You may confide it to me.”—“ Never to a living creature, Sir. Since you can feel for my distress, condescend to bestow your charity upon me, and permit me to leave you.”

—“ Charity! rather say that I shall
fulfil

fulfil a duty in endeavouring to soften your grief. Here is a louis d'or for you; but stop, I would rather give it to you at my own house. Come home with me, I must make you think better of me; and will convince you I have a tender and sympathising heart. Who knows! I may be able to protect you from the injustice of your enemies; for I am very certain you are not in your proper place, begging your bread, and covered with dirty rags. You have lost your father, your mother."—"My mother! oh heavens!"—

The young man hid his face with both his hands, and wept bitterly. Monsieur Belard endeavoured to comfort him, and took him by the hand to lead him to his house; he

absolutely refused to go, but François joined his master in intreating him not to refuse, and both shewed so much feeling, so much interest in what concerned him, that at length he threw himself at Monsieur Belard's feet, which he watered with his tears. "Well, Sir," said he, "I will follow you; I abandon myself to your guidance, though I shall perhaps once more be the dupe of my confidence.—But no, I shall not, for I beg, I conjure you, never to expect from me a recital of my misfortunes; it is only on that condition I can accept the asylum you have the goodness to offer me.—Let me work, occupy my time in the most servile employments if I can render you service; but leave me my secret and my obscurity. In determining
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me to follow you, you have gained what I have refused to the richest and most worthy merchants of the town."

"Very well, I will respect your secret, and wait till time, and the knowledge you will acquire of my character, may give you a better opinion of me, and make you think me worthy of your confidence.—Come home with me, and look upon me from this moment in the light of a father."

The poor boy was so weak, that Monsieur Belard, and his servant, found it necessary to assist him in walking as far as the house; where they were no sooner arrived than that gentleman conducted him into his study. There being no lamps in the streets of the little town he lived

in, he had not been able to distinguish the features of young Arthur, and was now surprised, and struck with admiration at sight of the handsomest face he had ever beheld, half shaded by a quantity of beautiful brown hair; and though he did not appear to be more than fifteen years of age, he was so tall, and his person so fine, that even the miserable rags which covered him could not prevent his being struck with it.

It was not difficult to perceive by a certain manner which accompanied all his actions, that the unfortunate boy had not been always in so deplorable a situation; and he expressed himself with so much politeness and elegance, that Monsieur Belard had not the smallest doubt of his having been educated with the utmost care.

After

After a good supper, and having passed the night in a comfortable bed, Arthur was presented in the morning by his friend François with a genteel, but plain suit of cloaths; and François remarked, as soon as he had dressed him, that he looked like the son of a nobleman.

Monsieur Belard observed him very narrowly, and perceived nothing to contradict the opinion he had formed of him; his writing was perfect, and he surprised him a couple of days after he had been with him, finishing a little drawing which he had executed with great elegance and correctness; and the next morning he overheard him from the adjoining apartment playing on the piano forte with the utmost taste and expression.

It was impossible to be more well bred, or more ready to oblige; in short his manners were those of a young man of fashion, and he did not shew the least surprise at the handsome and costly furniture in Monsieur Belard's apartment; proof sufficient that he had been accustomed to the same kind of elegance, however he might at that moment be in distress and wretchedness

Faithful to the promise Monsieur Belard had made to him, he never spoke to Arthur on the subject of his misfortunes, though he grew every day more and more attached to him, and could not, however he watched him narrowly, discover a single fault in his disposition; frugal, active, and laborious, he employed himself in writing for his friend, and
assisting

assisting him as far as he could; and whatever he wrote was so clear and well done, that it was easy to see he made it a point to endeavour to please him, and to merit the kindness he shewed him.

In the mean time, it was soon known to the whole town, that Monsieur Belard had adopted the *poor boy*, and many persons were jealous of the preference he had given him, so much were they interested in his concerns, and several of the first merchants in the place, came to call upon, and ask him a thousand questions, which he evaded, however, with so much politeness and good humour, that they left him extremely pleased with his manner and his good sense.

Monsieur

Monsieur Belard, though he had the strongest desire to be made acquainted with Arthur's secret, was too delicate to press him on the subject, and would probably have remained very long in the dark, but for a circumstance which at length opened his eyes. He one day received a letter, which appeared to be a circular one, addressed to the different magistrates of all the towns in France, and was to the following purpose.

“A boy, of the age of fifteen years eight months, about five feet high, brown hair, small mouth, black eyes, nose well formed, an oval face, and fresh coloured, escaped from his relations about three months ago. He was dressed in a brown great-coat, cotton pantaloons and wooden

wooden shoes. His name is Arthur.— You are desired to have him searched for in your district, and let him be sent to the minister of the police at Paris.”

This letter being written on stamped paper, and sealed with the official seal, Monsieur Belard could not doubt but that the poor boy, then under his roof, was the person alluded to; his duty obliged him to follow the orders which were sent to him; wishing however before he took any step, to come at the truth, he determined to shew the letter to Arthur, and endeavour to prevail upon him to confess the exact circumstances of his flight, and to befriend him as much as possible; but if he refused, to abandon him to his fate, as a little vagabond. He
had

had however no doubt but that he would open his heart to him; and the good man, miserable at the idea of being obliged to act with severity towards poor Arthur, for whom he felt so much affection, would not lose an instant in having his doubts cleared up. He was certain it must be him, but when he reflected that the boy was described as having quitted his family in mean attire, he thought he had deceived himself when he supposed he belonged to people of fashion; he could not by any means account for his polished manners, and genteel education.

Monsieur Belard, was alone when he received the letter.—He rung his bell, and ordered Arthur to be called. “My dear boy,” said he to him as he came into the room, “Do not be
alarmed

alarmed at what I am going to communicate to you, and above all things rest assured of my regard,—my protection,—if you are worthy of it.”—“ Sir!—what is the matter?” “ We must part, Arthur,—we must.”—“ I must quit you, my benefactor!—Oh! no, I would rather perish.”—“ Arthur you have hitherto made a secret of your adventures;—if I was made acquainted with your misfortunes, I might perhaps doubt whether this letter concerned you.” “ A letter concerning me! oh Sir!”—“ Here it is, read it.”

Monsieur Belard gave him the letter, watching anxiously the effect it would have upon him.—He read it, changed countenance, and fainted.—The usual means were taken to recall him to life, and he had no
sooner

sooner opened his eyes, than he threw himself into the arms of Monsieur Belard, and bursting into tears;—"I perceive, Sir, how it is," exclaimed he.—"I ought to have expected it when I accepted your kind attention; it is the duty of a magistrate to be watchful, and I was wrong to seek refuge in the house of the Mayor of——." "My child, you would think you had acted very properly, if you knew how to appreciate the humanity, the hospitality, the indulgence I even wish to shew you.—The *indulgence*, Arthur, mark me well.—You perceive that search is made after you.—Have you brought this mortification upon yourself; or have you not? Place your confidence in me, my dear Arthur! If you have
done

done wrong,—why—we will see.—I have some credit, and may be able,—I promise you every thing I can do:—but, if you are innocent, oh! nothing, nothing shall stop me,—fortune, power,—I will brave all, and every thing to obtain justice; and you shall have it, or I will sacrifice my life.”—“ Yes, yes, this is the language I have already heard from wicked and designing men, who after promising me their protection, were the first to betray me.”

“ My young friend, your head must really be disturbed, or you would not insult me in so unjust a manner; if you have been deceived and betrayed, it must be either that you have fallen into the hands of wicked persons, or that you are not exempt from faults.”

“ I am,

“ I am, Monsieur Belard, and I can prove it.—I call heaven to witness the truth of what I say.”

He pronounced these words with a firmness that delighted his benefactor, who took him affectionately by the hand, and continuing to question him said, “ Well, then, tell me why you left your relations ; you see how uneasy you have made them, and the strict inquiry they are making after you. We are anxious only on account of those we love.”—“ Or those we hate ; and that is exactly my case. I see, Sir, that I am once more going to be sacrificed. That letter,—the duties of your place, every thing obliges you to give me up;—but at least, let me hope you will take pity on an unfortunate boy.—I will reveal every
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circumstance of my wretchedness to you, and then leave you to judge.—O! I flatter myself I shall be thought not unworthy of your esteem, and your goodness; and before I begin, I swear solemnly, before that God who punisheth the liar,—that what I tell you shall be the exact truth.”

Monsieur Belard encouraged him as much as possible to repeat to him immediately the melancholy events of his life, which he did without hesitation, but as he learned several circumstances relative to his family some time afterwards, I have blended them in the following little narrative of poor Arthur's sufferings.

Monsieur de Rennecourt was one of the first merchants in Paris, and had not thought of forming any
matri-

matrimonial engagement, when the disputations and avaricious disposition of his brother Dermont, obliged him to break the partnership they had formed together, and to live entirely separated.

Monsieur de Rennecourt soon after became extremely fond of a young woman of a good family, but without fortune, by whom he was also beloved, and the consequence of their connection was the birth of Arthur. Dermont, who was some years younger than his brother, and hoped at length to inherit his fortune, was not in the least sorry at this engagement, hoping it would prevent his thinking of a more serious one; nor did the birth of Arthur give him much uneasiness, for the laws, at that time, were not at all
favour-

favourable to illegitimate children; but Monsieur de Rennecourt, always fond of his mistress, and doating upon his son, determined suddenly to marry her, and legitimate her child.

It was now that Dermont became furious; he swore never to see his brother again, and he kept his word.

Arthur was educated in his father's house with all possible care and attention; as soon as he had attained a proper age, the best masters that could be found were procured for him; and the child, born with a taste for all elegant accomplishments, made the most extraordinary progress in every art.

Monsieur de Rennecourt had a country house at Montronge, near Paris. There this worthy man and
his

his wife were adored by the whole neighbourhood ; and Arthur caressed and fondled by all those who knew him ; but misfortunes of every kind were soon to fall upon that respectable family, and the most cruel and violent strokes were reserved for the innocent boy, scarcely entered into life.

Monsieur de Rennecourt was snatched from his wife and child in less than four and twenty hours ; and the symptoms of his disorder were so extraordinary, that it was for some time strongly suspected he had been poisoned,—but by whom ? no one knew of any enemy he had, and the suspicion was dropped and forgotten ; he was buried in his garden, according to his desire ; and his widow and son were almost inconsolable.

Arthur

Arthur was nearly fifteen years of age when he had the misfortune of losing his father, and his last words made a strong impression upon him.—“My son,”—said he, a few minutes before he expired, “my dearest Arthur, pray continually to the Supreme Being, that he may, in his mercy, preserve your mother’s life; for should you have the misfortune of losing her before you are of age, and should you fall into the hands of your uncle Dermont, O! my child! my child! what evils do I not foresee ready to fall on your innocent head!”—such were Monsieur de Rennecourt’s predictions, and they were but too exactly accomplished.

His disconsolate widow could not prevail on herself to quit the place where the precious remains

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of her beloved husband were buried; every morning she led Arthur to visit his father's tomb, and there, both kneeling, expressed their grief and regret.

Madame de Rennecourt gave up her whole time to the education of her son; she had let part of her house to an amiable lady of her acquaintance, who was also a widow. She had a daughter named Emily, a charming child, about the same age as Arthur, and these young creatures were so fond of each other, that the two mothers had agreed to unite them, if they appeared to desire it, when a few years had gone over their heads. They both knew of this agreement, and already called each other *little wife and husband*.

Things

Things were in this situation; when one day, about ten months after Monsieur de Rennecourt's death, his widow, going into her balcony to call a servant she saw in the garden, suddenly dropped down, and expired immediately.—It would be impossible to describe the effect this sudden death of his mother had upon the wretched Arthur.—Alas! his father's prediction was soon to be accomplished!—The prudent merchant, Dermont, went immediately to Montronge; had the unfortunate Madame de Rennecourt buried by her husband in the garden; and gave himself the airs of a master. He got himself appointed guardian to his nephew, and he presented himself to him the next day under that title, saying,

cruelly to him,—“ I suppose, Sir, you know extremely well that you are the fruit of libertinism, and that your birth has deprived me of all the fortune which your unworthy father has but too well secured to you, by marrying your mother?”

Arthur was thunder-struck at the coarseness of his uncle's speech; who, without attending to the shock he had given him, ordered him to get immediately into the carriage which was to take them to Paris. He obeyed, and they were soon conveyed to the Rue St. Eustache, where the unfortunate boy began to shed fresh tears to the memory of his tender mother; but the brute, Dermont, forbade him to give any such proofs of his regret, saying,—“ Dry up your tears, Sir,
you

you will soon have other subjects of affliction."

Whilst they were making a sale at Montronge of the rich furniture Madame de Rennecourt had left behind her, her only son, her only heir was at Paris almost naked; his barbarous uncle had stripped him of his watch and all other valuables, had taken his clothes from him, and dressed him in an old great coat. He treated him in the most cruel manner, even to deny him proper nourishment.—As a reason for such atrocious conduct, this unworthy guardian published every where that his nephew had been spoiled by his ridiculous mother, that he had all her defects, and that he was obliged to treat the boy with severity, to prevent his becom-

ing one day a dishonour to his family.

In the mean time, Arthur naturally spirited, and not accustomed to be treated harshly, determined to escape his inhuman uncle, and resolved to fall upon some means of existence, preferring to submit to the most servile employment, rather than continue to live where he was treated with so much barbarity; and in the mean time he contrived to get out of the house every night, and go on foot to Montronge, where having jumped over the garden wall, he threw himself upon the graves of his father and mother, and shed torrents of tears. As soon as the day began to dawn, he returned to the house of his unnatural uncle, and went to bed.

Dermont

Dermont soon discovered his nephew's nocturnal visits, but chose to attribute them to a much less worthy cause than the real one, and locked him in his room.—Arthur found the means of escaping, and sought refuge in the house at Montronge; where he intreated the servants to keep him, but none of them dared venture to do it, except an old woman, who had the care of the house; she alone had the courage to receive and feed the son of her old master, who was half starved; and determined to receive boldly the hard-hearted guardian, whenever he arrived.

It was not long before he came, and asked for his nephew in a tone which made all the servants tremble.—Arthur had already climbed

over the garden wall and was gone, and Dermont, after having turned the poor old woman out of the house, set off in pursuit of him.

The poor boy could not run very fast, and his uncle enquiring of every one he met with, soon overtook him in a public house near the bridge of Neuilly. Arthur uttered a faint scream as soon as he saw him, and fell from his chair, but Dermont, who had already a plan formed in his head, changed his manner immediately, and instead of treating him, as he had been accustomed to do, embraced him tenderly, and assured him that he would henceforward behave to him with the utmost mildness and affection. Arthur however was not the dupe of these fine promises, he recollected his poor
father's

father's predictions, and a cold shivering ran through his veins whenever he looked at his uncle.

The supper was served, and whilst Arthur wiped his eyes, grown weak and red from continual tears, he remarked that his uncle sprinkled some powder over his plate; but having no doubt of the crime he intended to commit, he immediately dashed the plate upon the ground, and a dog which happened to be there, devouring the meat, died a quarter of an hour afterwards in strong convulsions.

Dermont perceiving what his nephew had done, reassumed his natural ferocity, and in order to hide his criminal intention, took him by the hand, paid for the unfinished supper, and got into his carriage. He

did not open his lips till they reached Paris, where he stopped before the Hotel de la Police, made Arthur accompany him into an anti-chamber, and there left him to shut himself up with the minister, and appeared no more, but an Exempt in a very few minutes conducted him to St. Lazare, where he was immediately thrown into a frightful dungeon.

Judge of the grief of the unhappy Arthur, so lately the idol of his father and mother, who twelve days only, since the death of the latter, found himself in a prison, persecuted by a barbarous uncle who had endeavoured to poison him.—He almost lost his senses, yet he recollected Emily and her mother, and he wrote a letter to them supplicating them to try to soften his uncle, and promising
to

to obey him in every thing, and never to quit him, if he would restore him to his favour and his liberty.

The letter would have softened the hardest heart, but it was intercepted, and it was Dermont himself who delivered it unsealed to the mother of Emily, to whom he said, in an ironical manner; “ I have heard, Madam, that my ridiculous sister-in-law, had formed the project of uniting your daughter with my nephew,—but it never will happen, Madam—for you never more will see Arthur as long as you live.”

He did not allow the ladies an opportunity, of giving an answer to his impertinence: he left them the moment he had done speaking, and Emily quite in despair at hearing of the detention of her dear little husband,

band, without communicating her intention to her mother, by the assistance of an old and faithful servant sold her watch, and what trinkets she had in her possession, and went to St. Lazare, where by her earnest solicitations, her tears, and above all *her gold*, she softened so much the heart of the gaoler, that he promised to set Arthur at liberty. The man kept his word; he opened the door of his dungeon in the middle of the night, and without telling him who or what had engaged him to render him so great a service, he conducted him into the street, saying,—“Go to the devil if you will,—you are at liberty.”

What happiness for poor Arthur. He did not stay to examine what humane and benevolent hand had
broke

broke the fetters by which he was held, but hurrying forward, both night and day, till he reached a large town, where dreading to be pursued and discovered by his uncle, he endeavoured to gain a scanty meal by running of errands for any one who would employ him.

A rich inhabitant of the town, struck by his figure, and pleased with his manner, insinuated himself so much in his favour, and made him so many offers of protection, that he did not scruple to reveal to him both his name and his misfortunes; but he had no sooner finished his melancholy tale, than he saw a cloud on the brow of his false protector, and heard him say, it was impossible that Monsieur Dermont should be capable of such horrible wickedness;

ness ; that he was a man of most respectable character and unblemished reputation.

Arthur well convinced of the danger of his situation, left the town instantly, and crossing the country, that he might not be traced, arrived at another, where his candour very soon exposed him to a new danger. A person to whom he revealed himself, flew into a violent passion, treated him as an impostor, and threatened to have him taken up, and conducted to his uncle.

The poor unhappy boy escaped once more, and came to the little town of which Monsieur Belard was mayor, positively determined to trust no one, but to keep his secret fast locked in his own breast ; the letter from Paris, however, made him
change

change his resolution, and he had no cause to repent of the confidence he placed in that worthy magistrate, who acted, as it may be supposed, a different part towards him, to what the two others had done: he pressed him to his bosom, and promised to defend him against the cruel and ferocious Dermont.—Arthur began to indulge himself with hopes of future happiness, and their departure for Paris was fixed on for the next morning.

Arrived in the capital, Monsieur Belard made immediate enquiry concerning Dermont, and soon had good reason to be convinced that public opinion is not always to be depended upon. “Monsieur Dermont the merchant,” every one said, “Is the most worthy man upon earth,

earth, his notes are as good as the bank (this is a great proof of probity in the eyes of many people), he is a good friend, he loves his wife and his children, in a word he is the most respectable man in the world.

Monsieur Belard did not, however, chuse to depend upon hear-say; he determined to dive into the truth of Dermont's character, and his conduct towards his family, and it was not long before he discovered one of his old servants in an hospital, where a long illness had reduced him to the brink of the grave. This miserable wretch, terrified by the situation in which he found himself, confessed to Monsieur Belard, that he had assisted Dermont to poison his own brother! And that he had
no

no doubt but that Madame de Rennecourt had perished the same way, and as he was upon the point of expiring, he signed his declaration, in the presence of two witnesses, whom he took with him immediately to the minister of the police.

That magistrate, though remarkable for his integrity and upright conduct, was prejudiced like the rest of the world in favour of Dermont, and the instant he mentioned his name, "He is, (said he) the model of all worthy men, he is in pursuit of a nephew, a good-for-nothing young rascal, who has robbed him, and even made an attempt upon his life, as he himself one day told me." — "Oh! horrible falsity!" cried
Monsieur

Monsieur Belard, who had not patience to hear any more ; but repeated poor Arthur's history, and the declaration of the servant. He then shewed it to him, signed and witnessed, though he said he did not wish, on account of the nephew, to publish the uncle's crimes.

The minister was extremely surprised at the information Monsieur Belard gave. " This is a shocking business," said he. " Oh ! if one could but discover the inner recesses of the human heart, what secret crimes would be brought to light ! how many persons of apparent respectability would be made public examples of !"—He wished to see Arthur, who being no farther off than the next room, was immediately introduced to him, and he was

so pleased with the air of candour and ingenuity of the youth, that he determined to protect and support him, and proposed that they should all three step into his coach, which was in waiting, and drive to Monsieur Dermont's house: this they accordingly did, and Dermont, pale and trembling, received them at the door.

The minister reproached him with his crimes, and threatened him with the utmost rigour of the law if he did not immediately give up his guardianship, and produce all the papers relative to the trust he had taken upon himself. The wicked wretch, intimidated and agitated beyond description, made all possible haste to obey the minister's orders, who accompanied by Monsieur Belard
and

and Arthur, left him soon after, but not without a guard to prevent his leaving his house.

The minister and Arthur's relations gave Monsieur Belard the guardianship of the interesting orphan, and the amiable boy grateful for the trouble he had taken to serve him, and for having restored him to liberty and happiness, could never sufficiently thank him; he was placed under the care of a gentleman of great merit, where he had an opportunity of finishing his education; but not till he had paid a visit to his amiable Emily, and had been made acquainted with the sacrifice she had made of all her little ornaments to save him.

Monsieur de Belard and her mother agreed at a future period to
unite

unite the destinies of those charming young people, not only in order to confirm their happiness, but that the desires of Madame de Renne-court might be accomplished.

Dermont found the means of escaping from his house; and in a few months the immense ocean rolled between him and a country where his crimes would infallibly have brought him to the gallows.

THE CLEAR-SIGHTED
BLIND MAN.

MONSIEUR Dermilly was the son of decent and honest parents, who having no fortune to leave him after their death, gave him an excellent education. He had the good fortune of being placed, whilst he was still very young, as secretary, in the house of a rich man, who not only loaded him with favours and riches, but was so generous as to give him his only daughter in marriage, making but one condition with him, which was, that if she became a mother, her first child should inherit her whole fortune.

They

They both wished for a son, and their prayers were heard, for at the end of the first year after their marriage, the wife of Dermilly was brought to bed of a boy, whom they named Charles, and her father kept his word with them, by immediately making a will, and giving all his immense riches to the new born child.

The old gentleman died some time after, and his daughter being seized with a malignant fever was not long before she followed her father. And Monsieur Dermilly was left alone with his little boy, then about four years old.

He had determined to remain faithful to the memory of a woman to whom his son owed his fortune, but love came in the way, deranged his
his

his prudent projects, and engaged him a second time in the bands of wedlock. He had married Charles's mother, without feeling the least inclination for her; but this time he followed the dictates of his heart, without consulting his reason, and fortune and prudence were equally sacrificed to love.

Monsieur Dermilly's housekeeper was both young and handsome, and moreover possessed of a great share of wit and cunning. She soon perceived that she had made a deep impression upon his heart, and that it would be no difficult matter to induce him to make her his wife. This project was no sooner conceived than accomplished; for Monsieur Dermilly almost adored her; and as he found she was not to be seduced
by

by any offers he made to her, to comply with his wishes on other terms, he resolved to marry her because he fancied he could not live without her.

About a twelvemonth after their marriage she presented him with a son, and from that moment the whole stock of his affection was settled upon the fruit of this second engagement. Charles was no longer of the least consequence in his eyes; he did not like to be troubled with him, and therefore placed him in a country school, at a great distance, where he was to learn what he could—anything—or nothing—just as it might happen.

Madame Dermilly was delighted at seeing her husband part with his eldest son so readily, and neglected

no means by which she could fix all his affection upon her own. She nursed him herself, and Monsieur Dermilly, accustomed to have little Anthony continually with him, grew more and more fond of him every day.

Three years passed away, and another son was born, which Madame Dermilly also nursed, and Francis became very soon as dear to his father as his brother was, and poor Charles totally forgotten, though it was to him they owed the affluence in which they lived. Monsieur Dermilly, however, took the utmost care of his fortune, and acted the part of a faithful guardian to the son he in every other respect entirely neglected.

The school master's letters were not at all satisfactory, and Madame
Der-

Dermilly (by whose directions they were written) never failed to read them to her husband, and aggravate the faults they laid to the charge of poor Charles.—He was lazy, ignorant, he could scarcely read, and would never be fit for any thing, in a word, he had all the faults which a boy of his age could possibly have.

Monsieur Dermilly did not absolutely hate Charles, but he could not help comparing his insignificant character with the progress he *fancied* Anthony and Francis were daily making, and he really considered them as wonders. Madame Dermilly was, however, very much crossed in her projects by an old friend of her husband's first wife's, with whom he lived in the strictest friendship, and considered as the most estimable

of men, a constant visitor in the family, Monsieur de Fréval, who had done what he could to prevent his friend's second engagement, because he foresaw the evil consequences which must naturally follow such a connection. Monsieur de Fréval often spoke to him on the subject of Charles, and made him many severe reproaches on his coolness and neglect of his eldest son; insomuch that Monsieur Dermilly could not help sometimes making serious reflections on his own conduct. One day, in particular, returning from a country excursion, he called at Monsieur Dermilly's house, and told him he had seen Charles, and that it was impossible to meet with a more amiable or intelligent boy. In short he said so much

much in his favour, that Monsieur Dermilly promised his friend he would send for him, keep him constantly at home and under his own eye, and let him receive the same instruction, care, and attention as his brothers.

Monsieur de Fréval was delighted beyond expression, and Monsieur Dermilly was beginning a letter to Charles's master to order that he should be sent home, when his wife entered the room, and as he was accustomed to submit most humbly, to the least of her wishes, he communicated to her the project he had formed with regard to his eldest son.

She threw herself into a violent passion, exaggerated the faults she chose to attribute to him; and finished by crying and sobbing violently;

saying she was certain that her husband had no longer the least affection, either for her or her children. Monsieur Dermilly, softened and affected beyond measure, caught his fury of a wife in his arms, protesting that he would leave Charles twenty years in the school he had placed him in, rather than cause a moment's uneasiness to the woman he adored.

Fréval, shrugging his shoulders, and raising his eyes to heaven, left the house without uttering a syllable; and many years passed over their heads before the two friends met again.

Monsieur Dermilly became once more a widower; he lost his second wife in the tenth year of their marriage; and now began to think it
was

was time to take Charles from his country school: he was grown a great boy, and though he still felt the same coldness and indifference towards him, it was necessary to give him an education suitable to the immense fortune he would one day be in possession of; feeling, however, the same dislike he had been inspired with to having him under his own roof, he begged a particular friend to receive him, and as he happened, just at that time, to be on the point of taking a journey into the part of the country where the school was situated, he readily undertook to bring Charles back with him.

Some months after this time, Monsieur Bivil informed Monsieur Dermilly, that he was returned; that

Charles had begun his studies and appeared to be possessed of an extraordinary understanding, joined to so much elegance and softness in his manner, that he was beloved by all who knew him; pressing him at the same time not to refuse himself the satisfaction of seeing so amiable a child.—Monsieur Dermilly refused peremptorily, and entirely occupied with the care of educating (or rather spoiling) Anthony and Francis, several years passed away without his having once thought on seeing their brother, who, now, a well instructed, and highly accomplished young man, wrote his father the most affecting and dutiful letters, in which he supplicated permission to throw himself into his paternal arms; but he
always

always found some reason to give why he could not comply with his wishes, and Charles continued to weep in silence at the insensibility of his father. As to him, he had no eyes but for Anthony and Francis, who appeared to him to be prodigies of wit and learning; and they had inherited so much of their mother's malicious disposition, had so much ascendancy over their father, and so much hatred against their brother, that they found no difficulty in keeping him in the same sentiments, nor in opposing those little emotions of tenderness which sometimes rose in Monsieur Dermilly's bosom, in favour of his unfortunate child.

Meanwhile, as guardian to his son, he found himself under an abso-

lute necessity of taking a journey to England, in order to endeavour to recover a considerable sum of money, which a person, in whom he had placed too much confidence, had carried off. This man having died in London, and having left a great deal of money, it was necessary to prove to his heirs, as guardian to Charles, the claim he had to part of it; in restitution of what had been stolen.

It was now that he began, for the first time, to find Charles might be of use to him: He knew no person to whom he could confide the care of his affairs in his absence; Anthony and Francis were too young, and Charles, now twenty years of age, and whom he daily heard spoken of with the highest commendation, appeared

appeared the only proper person to be depended upon. In consequence of this determination, he wrote to his friend that he should take him home for some months, and Charles lost not a moment to obey his father's orders, who was not a little surprised at seeing the handsomest young man he had ever beheld, enter his apartment, and throw himself into his arms, shedding a torrent of tears.

To avoid all explanations, Monsieur Dermilly told him with a serious air, that having occasion for an intelligent man to conduct his affairs, during a journey he was obliged to take on *his* account, he thought he might reckon upon his exactitude, and therefore he desired he would take possession of the apartment he

had appointed for him that very day; as he must begin his journey the next morning.

“So soon, my dear father!” cried Charles.—“Have I only had the happiness to see you to lose you in the same moment!”—“It must be so, my son, you will find in that bureau all that you will want, and I have only to recommend to you to pay the utmost attention to your two brothers, whom I now present to you; for I love them tenderly.”

Monsieur Dermilly was sorry for having pronounced these last words, for he perceived by the tears they had brought into Charles's eyes, and the profound sigh he heaved, that they had very much affected him. However he continued in this manner.—“I love you all three equally,
my

my children, I only expect Charles, that there should be no rivalship between you, no mean jealousy; Anthony and Francis, are so dear to me, the person who vexes them will expose himself to my utmost resentment."

Monsieur Dermilly, without perceiving it, again pierced Charles to the heart, by shewing so decided a preference of his two brothers; he took his father by the hand, pressed it against his bosom, and turned his head to hide the tears he could not prevent falling; but he pretended not to see them, and taking him into his closet, spent the rest of the day in giving him directions respecting different objects which he was going to leave to his management.

His

His stay in London was prolonged a great deal beyond the time he expected it would last; a law-suit to attend to, troublesome affairs to settle,—different kinds of embarrassments detained him in that city a whole year, in which time he continually and exactly received letters from Charles, with which he was extremely satisfied. It was impossible to write with more good sense, more precision, or more correctness, and at the same time with so much affection and spirit that his father often shed tears, in spite of himself, on reading some certain expressions, which proved the respect and filial love of which he felt himself so unworthy.

Charles never even hinted at his father's past conduct towards him,
but

but painted in such strong colours the happiness he should enjoy at his return, in finding himself under the same roof with him, that he determined never more to be separated from a son who became every day more and more dear to him. He hoped, he wrote his father, never to be absent from him, to make one in all his parties, to have no friends but his, to read to him, to pass all his evenings in trying to amuse him, and to improve by his conversation. And whilst he was continually writing letters of this kind to his father, not one arrived from either of his brothers in the whole course of the year.

This ingratitude affected him greatly, whilst the exactitude and the amiable style of Charles, made him

him perceive that he had but too long deprived himself of the society of a worthy son, and precious friend. He answered all his letters, and as they proved to Charles, that he loved him more and more every day, they gave him, as he wrote to his father, the most heart-felt pleasure.

At length he set out on his return to Paris, but he was melancholy and unwell, he had lost his law-suit, and another large sum of money, by a capital failure; this gap, made by his imprudence, in his son's fortune, must be filled up, and all he possessed was scarcely sufficient to complete the sum. Charles was now of age, and might demand from his father a faithful account of the trust his grandfather had reposed in him. Monsieur Dermilly determined

mined that his son should not suffer by his want of prudence, but that he would sell his whole property to make up the necessary sum.—He was ruined, but by a strange return to the preference he always felt for his two younger boys, he suffered less for himself than for them, who would now have nothing to expect but what they might hope for from the generosity of their brother.

Grief and vexation had so much inflamed Monsieur Dermilly's blood, that it occasioned a cruel disorder in his eyes, and he was so much afraid of entirely losing his sight, that he thought it adviseable to stop upon the road, and consult a person of the faculty. His old friend Fréval had a country house a few leagues distance from Paris, in a village

village through which he was passing, and as it was still fine weather, thought he might very probably find him there.—He knocked at the door, and was not disappointed; he was at home and glad to see him.

Monsieur Dermilly mentioned his indisposition to his friend, who was greatly alarmed on looking at his eyes, and insisted on his resting himself a few days at his house, before he went any further; a very skilful surgeon, who lived in the neighbourhood, was sent for, who assured him he only wanted a little care, and that his complaint would not be attended with any bad consequences.

When the two friends were alone, Monsieur Dermilly asked Fréval if he had been lately at Paris, and if
he

he had seen his children.—“ I saw them two days ago,” answered he, “ All very well, and free from *bodily* complaints.”—“ What do you mean? *bodily* complaints!”—“ Yes, for their *minds* are extremely affected.”—“ Explain yourself, I beg you, my good friend.”—“ Alas! my dear Dermilly, when you return to your house, what a change will you perceive in it.”—“ Is it possible? what my eldest son has neglected his duty!”—“ Your eldest son is an angel, my friend; I always told you so, unjust and unnatural father! you neglected and forgot him, to spoil two good-for-nothing boys.—Yes, yes, they have made fine work, I promise you.”

“ Tell me Fréval, how can it be? Anthony? Francis?”—“ In the first place,

place, you are to know that they are entirely masters of the house, and that their elder brother is nothing more than their most humble servant.—Every day parties of pleasure, balls, suppers, which last till midnight; libertine acquaintance, and women of bad reputation, drinking your wines, and turning your house upside down.”—“ Good heaven! but Charles! is this the way he takes care of my house, of my affairs, is it thus he executes my orders?”—“ What would you have him do? the young man knows that you have no affection for him, he never has seen you but once since his infancy, and that was the night before your departure; you ordered him not to vex his brothers, and the two good-for-nothing boys, have
taken

taken advantage of what you said, to command him, to take every thing upon themselves, and to threaten him with your resentment whenever he wished to oppose them: the estimable Charles, knows how you have been always disposed towards him, and feared that on your return you would be displeased, and ask him why he took the liberty of restraining your sons; and say that you chose, that you meant, they should pull your house down to amuse themselves, and see what company they liked."

"Upon my word, Fréval, you suppose my son to have a delicate idea of his father's sentiments! do you imagine this is his opinion of me?" — "No, not quite, my dear friend, but he yielded without perceiving it, to

to the empire, which they (taking advantage of your blind affection for them, and your hatred of himself) have always exercised over him.— In short you will find your house a scene of disorder and confusion.”

“ But pray who furnished these boys with money to enable them to live in such a manner?”—“ Oh! that was the least of the troubles; they played, they frequent all the gaming houses in Paris, and see the very worst company.”—“ But Charles once more?”

“ Charles sighs in secret at the excesses of his brothers without having the power to put a stop to them. He passes his time in reading in his closet, and desires, at the same time that he dreads your return.”—“ He is in the right, for I
must

must at least blame him for his unpardonable weakness, and can call no other person to account for the disorder which he has permitted to be introduced into my house.”—

“ You will be extremely wrong, my friend. Fearful of displeasing you, and knowing himself the object of your hatred, what would you have had him do with two wicked fellows, who repeated to him without ceasing, “ We will have it so, my father will approve of every thing we do, he loves us, and you he hates.”—This and such like pretty speeches, nay even blows.—Yes Dermilly, they have both fallen upon him, and kicked and cuffed him.”—“ What! could he not defend himself, and return the kicks and cuffs? a boy of his age!”—

“ Who,

“ Who, Charles?—He dare to lay a finger upon either of your Benjamins! Oh heavens! they would have thought themselves dead, and you would have thought so too.”

Monsieur Dermilly knew not what to make of all that his friend had told him, but firmly persuaded that he exaggerated the faults of Anthony and Francis, he did not scruple to tell him so, and to add that at any rate, if they had committed some little follies, Charles alone was to blame.—Fréval accused him of great injustice, and assured him, that what he had told him was strictly true; adding, that if he had any doubts of the bad conduct of his two younger sons, he might very easily convince himself that he was not imposed upon.

“ How

“How can I do it?” asked Monsieur Dermilly. “By putting into execution a project which I have this instant formed. As soon as your eyes are nearly well, go to Paris, and pretend that you have entirely lost your sight; by this means you will see all that passes, without their having any suspicion of your observing them.”

“I will do as you desire me, and the more readily, as it will give me an opportunity of discovering the real inclinations of my children; I shall see their hearts without disguise. Anthony and Francis will die with grief when they are told of the accident which has happened to me.” “Do not be uneasy about them, my good friend; their grief will not kill them, I will be bound

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for

for it.—I would even venture to answer that—but I will say no more—you are always too much prejudiced; and I would much rather you should form your judgment by what you see yourself.”

Monsieur Dermilly having already acquainted his children with his indisposition, it was agreed on that he should write them a second letter, wherein he should express his fears with regard to the complaint in his eyes, and some days after announce to them that he had entirely lost his sight. This plan was strictly followed, and about a week afterwards his eyes were, by the assistance of the surgeon of the village, perfectly recovered; except a little redness which remained on the lids of them, and which seconded extremely

extremely well the trick he intended to impose upon the young men.

Monsieur de Fréval insisted upon being the conductor of the pretended blind man, and they set off together. Arrived at Paris, and at the door of his house, Monsieur Dermilly was extremely surprised to see a number of new servants, who asked him whom he wanted.—His old servant, Firmin, whom Charles had kept with difficulty, knew him however, and shed tears of joy and sorrow at the same time: glad to see his master once more in his own house, though miserable at his supposed accident.

As it was only ten o'clock in the morning, Anthony and Francis were still in bed. Charles alone was up, and quitted his closet, where he had been writing some hours, to fly to

receive his father. The amiable young man pressed him in his arms, and drowned in tears,—“ Oh! my dear father,” exclaimed he, “ why do I see you in this deplorable state? Those eyes have only once beheld a son who honours and loves you so tenderly. How shall I support this dreadful stroke!”—

“ Be consoled, my son, heaven has spared my life, and given me a heart capable of loving you.”

“ Charming, delightful words!” cried Charles, “ which strike my ear for the first time. My dear father you never shall have any other conductor than myself; I will lead you wherever you wish to go. I will be like your shadow, for I will never quit you: deign to accept of my service; if you refuse me I shall die of grief.”

“ Yes,

“Yes, my child, I will accept of your services—I accept your offer.” Charles flew into his father’s arms, Dermilly shed tears of sensibility, and Fréval, who was witness to the scene, was overwhelmed with joy.

In the mean time Anthony and Francis had been roused from their slumber, and were not a little piqued when they came down, to perceive that their brother had been the first to receive their father, who remarked that they smiled upon each other before they spoke to him, as if the accident they believed to have happened to him, had given him a ridiculous appearance; and the eldest of the two, asked him if it was really true that he had lost his sight? “Alas!” said he, “is it possible, my dear father,

that you are so unfortunate?"—"It is but too true, Anthony: but come near me that I may embrace you: Francis where are you?"

They both approached Monsieur Dermilly; but how cold and indifferent were their caresses compared to those of Charles, whom he saw two or three steps from him, in the attitude of a person rendered motionless by grief.

"Well," said Francis, "you are really blind then, father? and is there no remedy?"—"None."—"You should, however consult the most eminent oculists."—"I have consulted them; every thing has been done, but it is impossible that I should recover my sight."—"And you can see nothing at all?"—"Not even the sun."—"Bless me how unfortunate it is!—well, let us see, there.

there must be a servant appointed to accompany you wherever you go, and watch continually over you.”—

“ It is not necessary, Sir!—I am provided with a conductor,—yes, I have one, and one very dear to me, and who will not trust the care of me to a servant.”

Charles lifted up his eyes to heaven, and smiled with an air of the greatest satisfaction.—“ It is, perhaps, Monsieur de Fréval,” said Anthony, “ who will take that care upon himself.—He is such a friend ;—so rarely to be met with !—and both my brother and myself, will, sometimes, take a walk with you.—What a pity ! you cannot now see our play houses, our brilliant assemblies, nor Tivoli, nor Bagatelle !—O ! Bagatelle is the most delicious place in the world. We have made a party to go

there this morning; you will allow us to go, Sir, will you not?"

Anthony and Francis left the apartment without any further ceremony, and a few moments after a curricule which drove rapidly from the door, left no room to doubt but that the young gentlemen were gone to Bagatelle. Dermilly was extremely shocked at their want of feeling, and began to suspect that his friend Fréval had told him nothing but the truth. When he stole a look at Charles, however, he felt himself consoled, though his affectionate conduct was a continual reproach to him for the manner in which he had hitherto treated him.—Alone with him and Fréval, he desired he would give him some account of what he had left in his charge.—

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He blushed, but did not answer; his father pressed him closely on the subject, but not knowing what to say, he intreated him to pardon his two brothers, who had unthinkingly refused to follow the advice he wished to give them.—“They have,” said he,—“followed their pleasures a little too much, but your presence, my dear Sir, will produce a change in their conduct, and order and regularity will be soon restored.”—

Dermilly was extremely pleased at this proof of Charles’s good disposition,—it was much more than his brothers deserved of him.—In compliance with his father’s order he went to his closet to fetch his accounts, having previously requested of Monsieur Fréval and Firmin not to leave the room an instant;

but he was no sooner gone than the good old servant, more sincere than prudent, acquainted his master with the whole misconduct of his two young sons.—He informed him that they hired new servants every day, and that his house was a rendezvous for gamblers and women of bad character; that they had sold, notwithstanding their brother's representations, several articles of valuable furniture; and that they treated him as if he was their servant; obliging him to see that their horses and carriages were taken care of;—and to find money for them whenever they wanted it.

Monsieur Dermilly's rage knew no bounds, and if Fréval had not sent away the old servant, he would soon have perceived that his master's
blindness

blindness was only a trick. Alone with his friend, he ventured to open his eyes, and examine the apartment he was in. Every thing was changed, his favourite pieces of furniture were gone, and the looking glasses stuck full of cards, which proved the dishonourable society they were connected with.—Firmin returned, and Fréval left his friend, having business to transact in a distant part of the town. Dermilly, though once more blind, perceived a tall thin ill-dressed man, walk into the room, and enquire for the young gentlemen: “They are gone out,” answered Firmin coldly.—“I am told that their old father is returned, and that he has lost his sight, is this he?—“It is he, Sir, it is Monsieur Dermilly.”—The stranger smiled
c 6 disdainfully,

disdainfully, turned round upon his heel with a great deal of grace, (as he thought) and muttered between his teeth—"If he is blind, he will be the less restraint upon us."—"That Sir,"—said Firmin to his master, "is one of your son's worthy companions; it is he who takes them to the gaming table."

Between this time and the hour of dinner several footmen passed the apartment, who sneered as they looked at Monsieur Dermilly, and appeared to shrug up their shoulders. Anthony and Francis returned, bringing with them a smart lady, and the sharper who had been there in the morning, whom Anthony desired to be silent, that his father might not know they were there.

The dinner was served, but when

Charles

Charles came down, and saw the worthy company placed at his father's table, he could scarcely contain himself, and would perhaps have shewn how much he was displeased, had not Anthony told him in a whisper, that if he spoke a single word he would have him turned out of the house.

Charles placed himself by his father's side, Anthony on his right hand, and his brother opposite to him, between his two friends. The lady and gentleman preserved a profound silence, so that the conversation was confined to the father and his children; but how many ironical smiles passed between them, and how easy it was to perceive that Monsieur Dermilly was become the laughing stock of his sons and their society,
except

except Charles, who did not even glance his eyes upon them, but appeared to be occupied by his father alone.—In the evening they were left together, but Monsieur Dermilly did not make any observation, or appear to have perceived the changes which had taken place in his house; and they had a very tender and affecting conversation.—His accounts were in the most exact order, as to what related to the house, and the young men had furnished money for their other expences, so that Monsieur Dermilly might very well pretend ignorance with regard to their faulty conduct.

A week passed on in this manner, and whilst Charles never lost sight of his father, but paid him the most unremitting attention, and endeavoured

voured by every means in his power to prevent his feeling his supposed misfortune, his brothers were not at home above two hours in the day, and even then it was with company whom they brought to dine with them. Their nights were passed at the gaming table, and thus they spent their time, fully persuaded that their poor blind father perceived nothing wrong in their conduct, nor the rude and impudent manner in which they treated Charles, though he never interfered with them in the smallest degree.

It was high time to put a stop to these disorders, and this was the manner in which Monsieur Dermilly thought proper to do it.—Charles, now of age, was to be put in possession of his fortune, and he determined

mined to do it without having previously acquainted him with his intention; and in the presence of his brothers.

To make up the deficiency, which the loss of his law-suit had occasioned, he sold his house privately, and having arranged all his accounts, though he found himself extremely impoverished, he felt a secret satisfaction in the recollection that he should see Charles happy; and have an opportunity of giving an excellent lesson to his younger brothers.

When every thing was ready, he ordered Anthony and Francis to meet him the next morning, at the farm of the Three Mills; it was near Paris, and belonged to Charles; they pretended a hundred engagements; a party to the Bagatelle, a dejeuner,
—but

—but it was all in vain; Dermilly would not hear of either, but told them he had a very great secret to communicate to them in that place, and charged them most seriously not to fail in meeting him.

At the hour fixed on, Monsieur Dermilly, accompanied by Charles, drove to the farm; where he told *him* also he had something to confide to him; and, continuing always his borrowed character of a blind man, he pretended to be extremely mortified at not being able to see the alterations and embellishments that had been made in the house and gardens.

Anthony and Francis were not yet arrived, and they breakfasted together very agreeably with their good friend Fréval, who came there,

as

as if by accident, for he was fully informed some time before of Monsieur Dermilly's project.

Whilst they were discoursing on indifferent subjects, a carriage stopped at the door, and Anthony and Francis, accompanied (so much boldness is scarcely credible) by the tall sharper and the fine lady, entered the house.

The two strangers came into the parlour on tip-toe, without speaking a word, and the young men, after a very cool "*good morning*" to their father, turned towards their two friends, held a kind of conversation with them by signs, shrugs, and ironical smiles, when all at once Monsieur Dermilly, opening his eyes as wide as he could, and assuming a look of great severity, said to his
two

two sons, “Gentlemen I have something of a very serious nature to say to you, but before I can explain myself, do me the favour of desiring that man and woman to quit this house immediately.”

“How, Sir,”—interrupted Anthony,—“has Charles endeavoured to make you believe that we have any body with us? I assure you he has imposed upon you,—we are here by your side, quite alone.”

“Charles has given me no information,—I see that gentleman and that lady, who at this moment are laughing at me, and whispering with each other.”

“Heavens!” exclaimed Charles, “My dear father, have you recovered your sight?”—“I never lost it, my son; but I wished to be convinced
of

of what I now can have no doubt of."— Whilst Charles, on his knees, returned thanks to God, his two brothers looked at each other with an air of astonishment, and appeared as if struck with a sudden terror. Monsieur Dermilly continued "Once more I tell you to send away these strangers; they have nothing to do with our family affairs, and I want to converse with you alone."

They immediately left the room, without either Anthony or Francis speaking a word to them.

As soon as they were alone, Monsieur Dermilly addressed his culpable children in the following manner:

" You appear extremely astonished, young gentlemen, at hearing that my blindness was only feigned, and that I have consequently been
witness

witness to your conduct ever since my return; the smallest of your actions has not escaped my observation, and if you are candid you can have no doubt of the light in which I hold you. I will not make you the least reproach,—if you recollect my weakness, the blind partiality I have shown you, and my unjust prejudice against your brother, the reproaches you will make to yourselves will be more than enough; but whatever your present astonishment may be, I am going to redouble it, by giving you a piece of information which you are very far from expecting.—I am ruined.”—“ Ruined!” —“ Yes, totally ruined: I do not possess a single louis d’or.—I have nothing but what I may hope from my friends.—Honour obliged me to

a restitution, which has reduced me to this extremity. The house you have come from at Paris is no longer mine, and from this day we must give up all thoughts of returning to it.—I see that you are thunderstruck by this information, but you may depend upon the truth of it; for though when I arrived, there still remained a degree of tenderness in my heart towards you, and that I wished to be certain before I condemned you, I have nothing now to prevent my speaking plainly.

“ Reflect on the style of life you have adopted, the ridiculous expence you have accustomed yourselves to, and if you do not blush when you recollect the shameful method you have taken to procure money to
enable

enable you to pursue your pleasures, believe me when I assure you that I never will suffer you to continue it. —You are now to make a choice,—either to renounce your father, or repent and follow the advice he is willing to give you.”

Anthony and Francis were humbled. “Command us, father,” said they, “we are ready to obey you in every thing.”

“The master of this farm is my friend, he will receive you willingly into his house, to assist him in his labours, and I will be answerable before hand, that he will not treat you as his servants.”

“What! my dear father, would you have us become plough-boys?” —“I am not talking of plough-boys, I have told you that you will not be made

made to feel your servitude; but I require of you that you work, and that you do not expect me to pardon you, till I am convinced you have changed your evil inclinations for others more worthy of you—but—if you refuse, I abandon you for ever.”

The two brothers threw themselves at their father’s feet, intreating him to pardon them.

“ We are sensible of our faults, ”—said they, “ and will obey you;—but who is the master of the farm, of whose goodness and humanity you give us so high an opinion? ”—“ You see him before you,—it is Charles: ”—“ Charles! ”—

Charles, astonished at what he heard, was going to speak ; his father made him a sign to be silent, and
continued ;

continued ;—“ The mother of your eldest brother was extremely rich, and her whole fortune devolved to him after her death: he is now of age, and I give it up to him; he is therefore now in his own house, and has many more belonging to him: It was also to enable me to complete his fortune, which I had imprudently broke in upon, that I have disposed of my own.”

Whilst the two brothers were struck dumb, Charles threw himself into his father's arms, “ Oh ! what generosity,” cried he, “ my dear father ! You have ruined yourself to add to a fortune already too considerable for me ! What should I be the better for it without you and my brothers ? —My dear brothers do not afflict yourselves ; all which Charles pos-

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sesses is yours and his respectable father's; divide with me what his care has preserved for me; on my knees I beg it of you."

"No, my son," interrupted Dermilly, "it would be extremely unjust that two young men who have hitherto treated you like their servant, and have neither regarded your being their elder, nor the prudent advice which you was continually giving them—It would be unjust, I say, to let them enjoy what ought to be the reward of virtue and filial piety.—Keep your fortune to yourself, and dispose of it according to your inclination."

A delicate dispute now arose between the father and the son; Charles pressed his ungrateful brothers to his heart, whilst they, affected

fectured by so much generosity, shed repentant tears on his fraternal bosom; begging only the favour of being permitted to work near him and their father.

Charles insisted that all he possessed should be in common among them. Dermilly refused as long as he could, but was at length obliged to yield to his son, and to accept of a pretty house with a farm belonging to it, and also a house in town, where his brothers should assist him in the care of his affairs.

A notary was immediately sent for, every thing was settled, and from that moment happiness reigned amongst the family of Dermilly.

ROBERT.

MONSIEUR de Belval, accompanied by two young men, his nephews, went on a fine morning in the month of July, to breakfast at the Bois de Boulogne, where, seated in a very agreeable apartment, near a bow window towards the garden, they were just beginning to enjoy some excellent coffee, accompanied with agreeable and entertaining conversation, when they were interrupted by a great noise at the traiteur's door; and they ran to the opposite window to see what was the occasion of it.

It

It was an old beggar whom the servants were driving from the door, loading him with bad language, and forbidding him upon his peril to set his foot near their house again.—“Let me ask the charity of others,”—said he, “if *you* have none to bestow upon me.”—But they still continued to drive him away, and, which made Monsieur de Belval extremely angry, the master of the house loaded him with abuse, and even with blows. He opened the window and called to them to desist, and the beggar perceiving he had gained, as he thought, a protector—“Oh! Sir,”—cried he, “how good you are!—heaven will certainly recompense you.”—“I will protect and relieve you,” said Mons. de Belval.—I will not permit any one to insult

your wretchedness,—here, take this piece of money, and go away from these wicked men.”

Monsieur de Belval drew out his purse to give something to the beggar, who already stretched out his hand to receive it, when the master of the house came into the room, and he drew back as if he had been thunder-struck,—“ Get away you detestable wretch,”—cried he,—“ are you not ashamed to impose upon a gentleman in order to extort money which you do not deserve. Such men as you are ought to be shunned by their fellow creatures; they should be left to starve, to perish.”—Monsieur de Belval astonished at this discourse still held the money in his hand, and the old man, having again approached nearer to the window,

window, attempted to take it, notwithstanding all the traiteur said to him, but he pulled aside Monsieur de Belval's arm, and drove the beggar once more from the door, who went away beating his breast, and lifting his eyes to heaven, which (Monsieur de Belval imagined) he accused of injustice.

When he was gone, the traiteur, said to Monsieur de Belval, " You are surprised, Sir, at my conduct, as well as that of my servants, to that old man, who appears to you to be unfortunate, and consequently respectable, but you will cease to be surprised, if you will give me leave to recount to you the detestable wretch's history, whom the wrath of heaven will follow to the last moment of his life.

“ I knew his son, Sir.—His son ! Oh ! what a worthy young man ! How little he resembled the culpable author of his existence. Dear Robert !—Let me wipe away the tears which his memory draws from my eyes.—But I will, with your permission, Sir, begin my melancholy tale.

“ I was a very young apprentice, when Calixte, the man who has just left the window, son of an inn-keeper as well as myself, already discovered so many vicious propensities that he was detested by all who knew him. He fought with every one, killed his father’s domestic animals, even those which were his greatest favourites ; he was particularly fond of burying poultry, leaving only their heads above ground, that he might
have

have the cruel pleasure of cutting them off with an old blunt knife.— He stole his father's wine, and sold it for half its value, when he wanted money, if not he drank it till he lost his reason.”

“ His father, a weak man, and entirely without education, for a long time tolerated and laughed at those *pretty little tricks*, but as he grew older, perceived, when too late, the evil tendency of such indulgence, and in great anger told him one day, that if he continued to conduct himself as he then did, he would turn him out of doors.

“ Calixte made no alteration in his manner of living, except becoming more cunning: he accused his brothers and sisters of all his thefts, and stole their little savings out of

their pockets whenever he could get at them; even their clothes he took out of the house and sold, that he might have money to spend in drink with the most abandoned wretches in the town.

“ At the age of twenty one, being at full liberty to please himself, he married, without consulting any one, a woman equally destitute of fortune and character. His father was much displeased at this marriage, and declared he would not suffer such a creature under his roof: Calixte, to spare him the sight of her, robbed him one morning of the little money he possessed, as well as every valuable he could carry away, and disappeared with the accomplice of his wickedness.—At the end of the year she
was.

was brought to bed of a boy, whom they named Robert.

“ As Calixte and his wife were reduced to the lowest degree of want and misery, having no means of living but by what they could pilfer, his father, who was a man of sensibility, took a journey to Paris, on purpose to engage these wretches to let him take charge of their son: and as their hearts were deaf to the cries of nature, they were delighted at having an opportunity of being quit of a burthen which they thought would be a great inconvenience to them; and gave Robert into his grandfather’s arms without hesitation; who, happy beyond expression, carried him immediately to his home, where he was educated at a great distance from the contagious example of his parents.

“ As the child grew up, he increased in understanding and virtue, and this tie had occasioned an interview sometimes between the old man and Calixte ; who never failed once a year to pay a visit to him, in order, as he said, to embrace his son ; but in reality to endeavour to get something from his father, who knowing his extreme necessity, was always weak enough to put himself to inconvenience in order to assist and oblige him.

“ This recourse, however, shortly failed them: the good old man died suddenly, and as his affairs were in a most ruinous state, his creditors seized upon his house, and Calixte found he had not a sixpence to receive.—Enraged at this disappointment, he vented his diabolical temper

temper upon Robert, loaded him with abuse, and even struck him, telling him, that having no bread to give him, he might go and seek it where he would.

“Robert was at that time seventeen years of age, he was very tall, strong, and well made, and not knowing what to do with himself, he was obliged to determine on enlisting.—Placed in a regiment under orders for going abroad, Robert bade adieu for a long time to his native land.—I belonged to the same corps, and it was at that time I first became acquainted with him. We were soon attached to each other; in short it was a friendship which lasted till the fatal moment which deprived me of him for ever;—but I will not anticipate,—you will hear but too soon

soon the shocking accident which happened to my friend.—I will for a moment leave him fighting by my side in the American war, and return to Calixte.

“That unnatural father, and his wicked wife, no sooner found themselves clear of a young man whose presence importuned them, and of whose virtue they could not help standing in awe, than they felt their spirits revived.

“Obliged to play a thousand infamous tricks in order to procure a bit of bread, they were at length pursued by justice, and to save themselves, changed their name, and sought refuge in other towns, and in that manner ran through all the large cities in France, where sometimes gamblers, sharpers, sometimes
marquises

marquises or counts, they duped every person they met with.

“ At Lyons, however, their infamous practices were discovered, and Calixte was taken up; his wife had just time to escape, and she had art enough to put so many engines at work that she at length obtained her husband's liberty, after two years detention.

“ It being no longer possible to remain in a town where they were so well known, they left it immediately, and travelled on foot many days and many tedious leagues, till they arrived at the entrance of a considerable forest, where, finding themselves without money, without clothes, without any kind of recourse, they determined to fix their abode.

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“In this place Calixte constructed a kind of hermitage, with branches and leaves.—His wife went every day to beg alms upon the high road, and when she met with a traveller alone, whose appearance was such, that she judged him incapable of resisting the strength of two, she artfully drew him towards their pretended hermitage, where under the pretext of hospitality, they contrived to stupify his senses by means of a narcotic, to strip him, and then carry him to some solitary part of the forest, where he might awake when he could.

“This horrible business continued several years, but was at length discovered ; for the wrath of heaven sooner or later will overtake the guilty.

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“ Of the travellers whom they had treated in this manner, some never recovered, some sought in vain to find either the road or the hermitage, and others having lost all memory of what had happened, fancied they had imprudently fallen asleep, and had been stripped by robbers; in short, whether by good fortune, or want of proper attention in the police, they followed quietly their detestable trade, till they had saved a considerable fortune.

“ One day a young gentleman and lady whom they enticed into their retreat, told them that they had met several brigades of the *Maréchaussée*, who conducted by some travellers, were coming into the forest to discover the retreat of the famous robbers.

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The imprudent couple little thought to whom they were giving this information; they took Calixte for a venerable hermit, and his wife for an unfortunate being with whom he divided the alms of well disposed travellers.

“ But this news struck them both, for a time, dumb with terror.—The wife went out to listen, and hearing the noise of horses at a distance, had no doubt but their hermitage was surrounded, and she returned pale and trembling to her husband; who had in the mean time taken care to lay the young couple asleep; and terrified at what he heard, could imagine no means by which they might have a chance of saving themselves, but by undressing the young man, and putting him on his long
brown

brown robe and his fur cap, and having cut off his beard, which he had let grow to a considerable length, to dress himself in the young gentleman's clothes. This was done in a minute, and his wife having made the same exchange with the lady, they left the hermitage, after having loaded themselves with their money and jewels, as well as those of their two guests, whom they left asleep, and exposed to be mistaken by the Maréchaussée for those they were in search of.

“ Calixte and his wife had not walked two hundred steps from their ancient habitation, when they met a party of soldiers, who fixed their eyes upon them with an attention that made them tremble. ‘ Are you not in search,’ said Calixte, re-
covering

covering himself, ‘Of a famous robber and his wife, who have for a long time past, stript and pillaged all the travellers who pass this way!’—‘We are,’ answered the officer who commanded them.—‘We know that the man is a kind of hermit, and his wife goes out upon the high road to beg.’—‘Exactly so,’ answered Calixte, ‘We have just seen them; fortunately for us they were asleep, and forewarned by the public report, we avoided the snare; follow the path to the left, into the thickest part of the wood, and you will find at about two hundred steps from this place the den of these unfeeling monsters.’

“The officer thanked the two wretches, and followed without hesitation the path they had directed him

him to take.—A little further Calixte perceived another brigade accompanied by a traveller whom they had robbed the night before, and as this was a more alarming circumstance than the other, they turned back and struck into the forest, and had the satisfaction of finding themselves very soon out of sight of the soldiers, who had taken a different road.

“ In this manner, amidst a thousand terrors, though heaven had permitted their crimes to be discovered, they escaped without accident to the next town, where they hired a carriage, and left that part of the country which had been the scene of their crimes, and was so nearly being that of their punishment.

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“ I never heard what became of the two young people left in their hermitage; no doubt if the Maré-chaussée found them and mistook them for the wretches who had just left it, they found no difficulty in proving their innocence. This object which would give us pleasure to be certain of, gave no kind of uneasiness either to Calixte or his wife, who finished their journey very quietly as far as Morlay, which was the name of the village where his father had lived, and where they were decided to fix their residence.

“ Complete villain as Calixte was, his last adventure had frightened him so much, and made him and his wife reflect so deeply on the possibility of what might happen to them, that they came to the pious resolution

resolution of living as much like people of probity and honour as it was in their natures to do, and he saw with pleasure the place where he had been brought up. He took his proper name, as son of the inn-keeper Duprés, who died about ten years before.

“ He soon perceived that his neighbours shunned him, that they had not forgot his old tricks, and that he was universally despised, but he troubled himself very little about it; he thought he was rich enough to live without wronging anybody.—His father’s house, which he was in the intention of purchasing, was a quarter of a league from the village, in a lonely place, where they could live as they liked without seeing any company; and act in
every

every respect as they thought proper.

“ He pretended to have made a little fortune during his voyages, and having purchased the house, he settled himself in it with his unworthy companion, but as they expected, no one came near them, not a single inhabitant of the village took any notice of them ; but they easily consoled themselves, for they set no kind of value on the good opinion of their neighbours, and though they heard that reports but too well founded were circulated respecting the manner in which they had acquired their fortune, they despised them, persuading themselves that they should have a right to quiet them, if ever they became too serious.

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“ In this manner these wretches passed two years, in which time they had squandered a great deal of the money they had amassed by their villainy ; they were even on the point of selling their house when the adventure happened to them which I am going to recount to you.

“ I must now leave Calixte for a moment, but you will soon see whether I merited the reproaches you made for treating him with so much harshness.

“ Robert was my companion and friend in America. Robert, handsome, well made, endowed with every pleasing talent, was beloved by his commanders for his bravery, his exactitude in doing his duty, and for his virtues. He was arrived at the rank of quarter-master, and in

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several

several actions wherein he distinguished himself and gave particular satisfaction, he had opportunities given him of making a large fortune, if he had been more interested; as it was, he was in possession of a considerable sum of money at the end of the war, and the regiment being disbanded, Robert was not sorry to have a little rest: he had received two dangerous wounds, one of which had disfigured half of his face, the other put his arm out. He was pretty well recovered of both of his wounds, though he still wore his arm in a sling, and did not expect to be able to use it for a long time, it was therefore natural he should wish for repose; but he had another motive which made him wish to revisit his native country.

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He had for twelve years preserved the tenderest affection for a young girl, the daughter of a farmer who lived near his grandfather, and his long absence had not in the least effaced the impression which the charms of the amiable Mary had made upon his heart; he had constantly written to her during his military career, and had received four letters from her; in the last of which she wrote him, that she was not married, but reserved her hand and her heart to give him whenever he returned.

“ Robert, delighted at her constancy, longed passionately to return to Morlay to offer his heart and his little fortune to his mistress, and as I was in his confidence, I advised him to hasten his departure, and not

to lose a day, that he might receive the reward of his love. There was but one point on which I thought proper to be secret; I knew that Calixte was the most worthless of human beings, but Robert was entirely ignorant of his father's conduct; his grandfather had wished not to expose the father to the child; he would not by an imprudence diminish the respect which the latter owed to the author of his life, and I thought it adviseable to follow his example; so that Robert never suspected that he owed his existence to two infamous wretches who merited condign punishment.

“The worthy young man found no fault with Calixte, except on account of the brutal manner in which he had abandoned and drove him
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from his door after his grandfather's death, but ever ready to forgive, and find excuses for the faults of others, Robert attributed this conduct to his father's unfortunate situation, and though he had seen but very little of him in the course of his life, he proposed if ever he found him, to offer him the half of his little fortune, which would be more than sufficient to set them above want. He had written to them, but had never received any answer, so that he was entirely ignorant of their fate and whether he should ever see them, but determined to take every step to discover the place of their abode.

“ Having, as well as Robert, got my discharge, I travelled with my worthy friend till within about three leagues of Morlay, where I left him to take a cross road, which

brought me to my mother's house, where I was impatiently expected.

“ I shall never forget the moment of our fatal separation; we were standing together on a sort of bank from which we could perceive the steeple of the church of Morlay.— ‘ There,’ said I, ‘ Robert, in that spot lives your dear Mary! go and throw yourself into her arms, whilst I fly to my mother, who is perhaps at this moment watching my arrival in that other village which we see on the left; we must separate my friend; to-morrow is a holiday; all the inhabitants of those villages will meet at Jonathan's mill, to dance and make merry, we shall both be there. Adieu! Robert, to-morrow we meet again.—Adieu! may you be as happy as I am going to be, and, let us
never

never forget the years we have spent together, in intimacy and friendship.'

"The weather was extremely cloudy, the air heavy; every thing was melancholy; we were both so, without being able to account for it; it was time for us to separate, we shed tears, and pressed each other's hand, unwilling to part; but this painful situation was soon over, and Robert following the great road, I struck into a path across the country, which must, I recollected, bring me to my mother,—all that Providence had left me.

"We often turned to look and wave our hands, but at length lost sight of each other, and Robert continued his way. The first house he saw made his heart beat with

pleasure. It was that in which he had passed his youth, where his grandfather had died ; but he little imagined that it was now occupied by Calixte.—He sighed and passed on.

“ His heart now began to beat more violently ; he was at the door of Bernard, his dear Mary’s father ; he was on the point of seeing again the object of his first and tenderest affection ; her whom in his childhood he had called his sister, and whom he in all appearance would soon call his wife ; poor Robert was so agitated that he could scarcely stand, however he knocked at the door ; it was opened by Genevieve, the old servant belonging to the farm, who was frightened at seeing a military man whom she was not acquainted

acquainted with.—‘What do you want Sir,’ asked she, ‘To lodge here perhaps? my master is exempt from lodging any of you.’—‘What Genevieve! do you not recollect me?’—‘No—stop—no, not at all.’—‘Not at all! you have then forgot the little wicked boy, who used to torment, and play you so many tricks? little Robert who lived with his grandfather Duprés?’—‘Oh dear! master! Monsieur Bernard! Mademoiselle Maria! Come here every one, here is little Robert, grown so tall, pray make haste.’

“The good creature called till she brought the whole family about her, and in an instant Robert was pressed to the hearts of the two objects he loved with the sincerest affection.

“I will not tire your patience by describing the tender scene which

followed ; the best refreshments the house afforded were set before my friend, and after conversing a long time on different subjects ‘Apropos,’ asked Bernard, ‘have you seen your father?’—‘My father, alas ! I know not where to find him.’—‘He lives here.—He has bought your grandfather’s house.’—‘Is it possible?’—‘It is very true, my dear boy,’—but—‘but what ? is he poor?’—‘Oh yes ; he is poor, but it is by his own fault.’—‘No matter, my father is poor and unhappy, I will fly to relieve him ; but my mother?’—‘She is alive and with him, but no one here sees them.’—‘I understand you, they are poor, and consequently neglected.’—‘Would you injure me by such a suspicion Robert?’—‘My father and mother alive, and in want, oh Bernard ! now indeed I feel

feel the value of my riches.'—
'Your riches?'—'Yes, Bernard, I am rich, very rich for a person of my rank; I have there in my haversack five hundred louis d'or, and to that amount in valuables.'—'Four and twenty thousand livres! is it possible! And how have you been able to lay up such a sum?' 'I will tell you, but at this time I can think of nothing but my father and mother. — Listen Bernard; you promised me in your last letter, that you would give me Mary.'—'Yes, my friend, and I do not ask four and twenty thousand livres for that, the half will be enough to settle you comfortably; give the rest to your father if you wish it; you shall be the husband of Mary, but I have a condition to make with you.—When

you have given the sum of money to your father, you must see him no more.’—‘Gracious God! what do you mean? Why such a condition?’—‘My friend—I have my reasons.’—‘What I suppose calumny, my dear Bernard; I will make you forget your prejudice—but my father, I long to see him, and I will go immediately.’—‘What! now?’—‘This moment; I have a mind to enjoy his surprise. It is twelve years since we met. I am very much changed since that time, and even a little disfigured just now; he will not know me, and I will not make myself known to him till to-morrow. To-night I will shew them my money, and to-morrow I will say it is yours.’—‘What a project! stay with us to night Robert, it will be time enough

enough to-morrow.'—'No, no, I leave you, I must see the respectable authors of my existence.'—'Respectable!'—'Hold Bernard! do not speak ill of them before me, I intreat you; adieu, adieu! my dear Mary; I take all my little fortune with me, because I do not know what my parents may want; and if it should be necessary to sacrifice to him part of what I destine for Mary, I will do it Bernard; I will do it, Nature has stronger claims upon me than Love.'—'Robert do not go to night, it is late; I know not why, but I am full of apprehension; a cruel presentiment which I cannot define.'—'How childish! can a son have any thing to fear in throwing himself into the arms of his father?'—'Robert!

bert! you will go then? Well then to-morrow we will sign the contract, and Mary shall be yours.'—' Oh happy day!' said Robert, who escaping from his arms, ran like a mad man, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, to the solitary house of his father, where he flattered himself he should surprise agreeably two beings very dear to him, and who certainly little expected to see him.

“ He knocked; the door was immediately opened. ‘ What do you want?’ enquired his mother. ‘ I am a poor soldier who begs your hospitality.’—‘ What to a soldier at this time of the night?’—‘ I beg you not to refuse me, perhaps you will be glad to have received me.’—‘ Have you got a billet?’—‘ I have one, not
upon

upon a bit of insignificant paper, but written upon my heart and upon your own.’—‘ And you are without a *sous* ?’—‘ Pardon me, I am rich enough to command the best inns in the neighbourhood, but there is but one house where I can be comfortable.’

“ Calixte, who came to the door at that moment heard the last words ; he had just lost an enormous sum of money at play in the neighbouring town, where he often went to meet a set of villains like himself, and hoping to make something out of the soldier he introduced him into his parlour with the utmost civility, and appearance of humanity and openness.

“ Robert, delighted at the kind reception he received, and extremely amused,

amused at their not knowing him, gave them an account whilst they were at supper of his campaigns and different adventures, and finished by spreading out his fortune before these miserable wretches. ‘There are,’ said he, ‘four and twenty thousand livres, part of which I intend to give to-morrow morning to a person extremely dear to me, but who little expects it.’—‘To whom do you mean to give it?’—asked Calixte with a smile, ‘To your mistress?’—‘Oh no Sir! to my father. I think I see him, as well as my mother, that they press me to their bosoms, surprised at seeing me and at receiving from my hands this little present.’—‘I believe so,’ said Calixte, without the least suspicion that he was speaking to his
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son, and who already longed to seize on the whole sum which was destined by Robert to filial piety and love. Robert, who was more and more amused at perceiving that his parents did not suspect him to be their son, and delighted at the idea of surprising them in the morning, desired he might retire, being extremely fatigued.

“ Calixte and his wife, having in the same moment, (without any opportunity of communicating their dreadful project to each other) conceived the crime which they but too easily found the means of executing, conducted him to a retired and melancholy room, of which they gave him the key, because they had another by which they could enter whenever they pleased.

pleased. After receiving from them the utmost marks of attention and civility, Robert wished them a good night, and went to bed, pleased at the kind reception he had met with, and attributed to them all those virtues which glowed in his own bosom.

“ You foresee no doubt, gentlemen, the horrible scene which I have to relate.—I wish I could soften it a little, but it is impossible. Towards midnight Robert was awakened by a noise in his room ; startled and without a light, he asked who was there and what they wanted. ‘ Your money,’ replied Calixte, ‘ or you are a dead man.’ Robert who knew his father’s voice, was thunderstruck ; seized with horror he had not the power to utter a single word ;
and

and he immediately received several stabs, which left him bathed in blood.

“ Whilst Calixte was committing this shocking deed, his wife was taking possession of his money and effects, and only stopped when he told her in a low voice that he was dead, to ask him what they should do with the body.—‘ In the well—down there—you understand me.’ ‘ Oh yes, I will help you.’

“ They had begun to drag poor Robert out of the bed, when opening his eyes almost in death, ‘ Barbarians!’ cried he in a faint voice, ‘ you have murdered your son ; weep, weep for ever, I am Robert.’

“ The wretches were in their turn struck dumb with horror, their savage hearts overcome by nature, they

they threw themselves upon their bleeding child, accusing heaven, accusing themselves, and for the first time loading each other with reciprocal reproaches and curses.

“In the meantime they placed poor Robert in his bed, endeavoured to stop his blood and dress his wounds, for they were afraid to send for a surgeon; in short they knew not what they did, they were almost distracted, and day light surprised them in this frightful situation. They now consulted together on what they should do; and agreed to spread a report that the young man had attempted to destroy himself, that is, if they could obtain his leave for it when he recovered his speech: in consequence of this determination the wife went out in search of
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of the surgeon of the village, who decided immediately that Robert had but a few days to live.

“ The officers of justice, who arrived soon after, shook their heads, and were of opinion, when they examined the stabs in his body, that he had been assassinated. In the midst of this disorder, Calixte and his wife terrified at what might be the consequence of their crime escaped, abandoned their wounded son, their house, and their effects; and notwithstanding the strictest search was made for them they never were discovered.

“ Bernard, the poor disconsolate Mary, and myself, disappointed at not meeting my friend at the place of rendezvous, flew to the house, where we watched by him several nights.

nights. The fourth day, having recovered his speech, he desired to speak to me alone, and gave me an account of the fatal accident which had happened to him, desiring me however in respect to the honour and safety of his unworthy parents never to reveal it to any one. The fifth day he expired in our arms. He had made a will, and bequeathed all he possessed to Mary, who made no use of it but to throw herself into a convent, where death, a year after, put an end to her grief and her regret.

“The house was seized upon by Calixte’s creditors, and I left the country to settle at Paris. I had forgotten the author of so many crimes, until I met him one day, begging in the neighbourhood; I
knew

knew him immediately, and reproached him bitterly.—He said he had lost his wife, and was unhappy, but denied being the man I took him for. I enquired, however, about him, and found I was not mistaken; but I owed too much respect to the memory of my friend to bring the wretch to justice.

“Such is the man, Sir, who just now excited your generous compassion, the monster who assassinated his child; but let him keep out of my sight, for I will pursue him with blows and reproaches wherever I see him.”

THE HOGSHEAD.

RAPINE, who from a footman, was become, by stock-jobbing, a person of great opulence, purchased a house adjoining to that of Monsieur de Verlac; a man of respectable character, and possessed of an easy fortune, which he had acquired by his industry; and who still continued in some degree the business of a wine merchant.—He had an only daughter, a very amiable girl, whose name was Celestina; and Rapine, who was a widower, lived in a retired manner, with his son Frederick, an interesting, worthy young man, who was made very unhappy, by the excessive avarice of his father.

Frederick

Frederick adored Celestina, by whom he was also tenderly beloved, and the mutual affection of the young people was known and approved of by Verlac; but he greatly feared their union would meet with opposition on the part of Rapine. He determined, however, to speak to him on the subject, and as they were upon a tolerable footing of intimacy, invited himself one day to dine with him. Rapine did not much like giving dinners; but reflecting that he might easily contrive to dine twice with his neighbour Verlac in return, he received him extremely well, and was in very good humour, till he was made acquainted with the wishes of Frederick and Celestina, and was asked if he would give his consent to their union. He flew into a

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terrible

terrible passion,—pretended to be too poor to settle his son in life, and, in a word, refused to accept the offer of Celestina's hand.

Monsieur de Verlac was extremely hurt at this disappointment, but not choosing to let it appear, he changed the conversation, and complimented Rapine upon the goodness of his wine.

In fact if Rapine's table was not furnished with delicacies, his wines were excellent, and offered in so much profusion that Verlac was quite astonished.—“ Yes, indeed, neighbour,” continued he, “ I assure you, that your wines are delicious, and that though I am in that business, I have none better in my cellar; they are really of the same kind as my best wines.”—

“ I am

“I am extremely glad that you find them good, answered Rapine, I had them from the first hand, and am happy to have an opportunity of offering a bottle to a friend.”

Verlac returned to his house extremely surprised that so great a miser as Rapine should buy such wine, and still more so, that he gave it so freely. —But he thought no more of it; for finding Frederick and Celestina together in the parlour, he informed them of the ill success of his embassy, and added, that he was afraid Rapine would never be prevailed upon to consent to their marriage.

The lovers parted very unhappy, and Frederick, on entering his father's house, received a sharp rebuke, for having taken the liberty to fall in love, and think of marrying, with-

out having asked his leave.—“ I am not a man of fortune, Sir,” said he, “ and those who spread such a report, and pretend to make me pass for rich, are no other than a set of wicked people, who wish to have me robbed and murdered; you are not yet settled in any business,—and you are too young to marry,—let me hear no more of this nonsense,—and above all, never let me see you set your foot in Monsieur de Verlac’s house,—I forbid you upon your peril,—do you hear me?—I positively forbid you.”—Frederick sighed in secret at being dependent upon such a father; but it did not prevent his seeing Celestina every day.

It is necessary in this place to let the reader know how it happened,
that

that the miser, Rapine, had always such excellent wine to regale his friends with. It has been already mentioned, that his house joined that in which Monsieur de Verlac resided. The two houses had some years before formed but one, but it was extremely large, and the proprietor finding he was likely to have some difficulty in letting it, had with much expence contrived to make two pretty houses of it, which he had sold immediately.—Rapine, in rambling about the holes and corners of his house, discovered a place where there had been a door, which formerly communicated with Verlac's cellar.—This place was slightly stopped up with a few large stones, and a little mortar, and he had with very little trouble taken out one of

them (which he could replace in a moment) and perceived that he should have no difficulty in getting into his neighbour's cellar whenever he had a mind.

Tempted by avarice, and the desire of stealing what he could not prevail upon himself to pay for, he made frequent visits to the wine, when he was certain there was nobody in the way, carrying off many bottles of the finest kinds, and even sometimes drawing jugs full from the hogsheads: the stone was replaced with care, and no one had the least suspicion of the theft, for there were so many hogsheads, and so much lumber in the cellar, that unless they had any reason to suppose Rapine capable of so much dishonesty, it was not probable they should perceive it.

Verlac.

Verlac, however, who was very exact and regular, could not avoid seeing that his bottles disappeared, and that the wine was diminished in some of his casks, and concluding he was robbed by some of the men he employed in his cellar, he dismissed them one after the other, so that the poor fellows paid for Rapine's want of probity; and Monsieur de Verlac drank his own wine at his neighbour's house, without having the smallest suspicion of it.

Matters went on in this manner a very long while, to the great satisfaction of Rapine, but as sooner or later crimes are generally discovered, and the wicked punished, the hour was nearly arrived in which he was to be exposed in the most shameful and humiliating manner.

On a certain day Rapine crept through the hole he had made into his neighbour's cellar, and began pillaging, as usual, from right to left; but it happened that Verlac had taken it into his head that very same day to take an inventory of his wine; and he was at that moment with several other persons in a small cellar adjoining to the large one, where they were writing in the most profound silence. Rapine thought he heard a noise, and he was thunder-struck at seeing Verlac and his people coming towards him; it was impossible to escape by the way he entered, he must have met them,—besides he could not replace the stone without some noise.—He had but just time to creep into an empty hogshead, and there without daring
to

to breathe, he lay trembling from head to foot.

Verlac did not see Rapine, but he could not help perceiving the hole in the wall.—“What is this?” cried he, “here is a stone fallen from the wall! how can it possibly have happened? Make haste, Henry, William, call the two masons who are at work above, let them bring brick and mortar, and stop this breach immediately.”—His orders were obeyed, and in less than an hour the stone was replaced, and the hole was so completely and strongly shut up that it was impossible to open it.

During this operation the miser lay almost dead with fear in his hogshead. He heard them come and go, now very near him, then at a distance,—
what

what a situation ! At length two men began to remove his hogshead, which happily for him, lay upon its side ; and away it rolled in an instant to the other end of the cellar. The unhappy Rapine, his head giddy, and almost breathless, dared not say a word ; his hogshead and himself were placed in a corner, and a number of other empty ones were piled on the top of his, so that it could not be moved ; and to complete his misfortune, the open part was placed against the wall, and there was no possibility of his getting out.

He still, however, flattered himself that by remaining quiet till they were all gone, he should find some means of escaping, but it was late before the masons had finished their work, and the night was pretty far advanced

advanced when Monsieur de Verlac, and the people he brought with him, quitted the cellar.—They fastened the door with three padlocks; and our miser fast in prison, passed the night in the manner I have described, with the additional pleasure of being visited by fifty rats, who even ran over him, without the least fear, whenever they thought proper.

The next morning, overwhelmed with grief, fatigue and apprehension, he groaned and sighed bitterly; a boy who was sent to fetch something from the cellar, hearing such melancholy sounds, was scared out of his wits, shut the cellar, and flew up stairs, crying, as loud as he could, that the devil was in the house.—Another was sent for some wine, but returned faster than he went, and
still

still more frightened than the first;— in short all the servants swore that the cellar was full of ghosts, and not one among them could be prevailed upon to set his foot into it.

Some time before this circumstance happened, an old woman had died in a garret at Monsieur de Verlac's, and it was concluded that it must be the poor creature; who not being able to rest in her grave, made a noise in the cellar when anybody approached it. They each went and put their ear to the door to listen, but ran away immediately, making the sign of the cross, and repeating to each other what they had heard, and even a great deal more.

Two days passed on in this manner, during which time Rapine had
neither

neither ate nor drank. Frederick extremely uneasy at his father's sudden disappearance, endeavoured by every means to discover the place of his retreat.—He little thought of looking for him in his neighbour's cellar.—He went to Monsieur de Verlac to consult with him and Celestina on the steps he ought to take, but they were equally surprised, and unable to form any conjecture on the subject.

In the mean time Monsieur de Verlac heard of nothing all day but the ghosts and devils which were in his cellar; not a soul would go into it, let them want what they would,—the boldest of his men had deserted it; which did not in the least suit with his business.—He was fortunately neither fearful nor
superstitious,

superstitious, and imagining some cats, or other animals, were shut up by accident in the cellar, he determined to go down alone, and endeavour to discover the truth; but Frederick desiring to accompany him, they each took a light in one hand, and a large whip and a pistol in the other, and went down.

The men, and all the servants belonging to the family, wished them a good journey from the top of the stairs, but none of them shewed any inclination to be of the party. —Verlac listened at the door before he unlocked it, and distinctly heard several groans;—he changed colour, but determined to pursue his project. —They went into the cellar, looked round them, visited every part, but could see nothing; still they heard
the

the groans. Frederick said he was certain the sound came from the casks which were piled up in the corner, and that he would take them down, but he had no sooner began to remove the first, than they all gave way, and rolled one after the other into the middle of the cellar. This was occasioned by Rapine's fruitless efforts to get out; he had moved them, but not enough to answer his purpose.

Convinced there must be some person among the hogsheads, Verlac called to Frederick to drop his whip, and take his pistol. This completely roused Rapine from the death-like stupor which had almost overcome his faculties, and he cried out in the most lamentable tone, "for God's sake do not kill me! I am a worthless
man,

man, but I beg for mercy,—pray pardon me.”—

Frederick knew his father's voice, —he shuddered at the sound, but getting some of the hogsheads out of the way, he turned over that in which he lay, and out tumbled the miser, like a bundle of old clothes. —“ So !” said Verlac “ is it you neighbour ?” —“ Yes—it is me—I have not tasted any thing these two days,—neither meat, or drink,—I am so weak !” —“ Alas ! father,” interrupted Frederick, “ what could you come to seek for here ?” —“ It is not difficult to guess,” —said Verlac, in an angry tone,—“ and the opening in the wall, which I have had shut up, shews me very plainly who it is that has so long robbed me of my wine.”

“ It

“It is true—it is true—yes—I confess it,—but pray do not ruin me, spare my life, and I will sacrifice all I have to give you satisfaction.”—

“How! you miserable old miser you have had the boldness to”—“He is my father,” interrupted Frederick, “spare him in my presence, I beseech you; and consent to the plan I am going to propose to him.—You cannot, father, look upon what will promote my happiness as a sacrifice, yet, as you offer to do every thing that can be required of you, consent to my union with Celestina, whom you know I adore.”

—“Your son is right,”—said Verlac, “but if I make this the condition of my forgetting what has happened, it is not from any desire I can have to be allied to so despicable a being

as

as you are, but because I wish to make my daughter happy, as well as this young man, who is so very unlike his father."

Rapine, in such a situation, was glad to hide his shame by consenting to every thing Monsieur de Verlac asked of him; who having sent his people out of the way, pretended he had found the cat, which had occasioned them so much alarm. Frederick assisted his father to quit the cellar, and conducted him secretly to his own house; where he gave him all the attention and care which his weak state required.

Frederick and Celestina were soon after married, and Rapine incensed at having been so dreadfully humiliated, retired into the country, where he never could be prevailed upon to

see

see any-body. Verlac, who was not very anxious for such society, took Frederick into partnership with him, and the young people always preserved with the utmost care, Rapine's hogshead, to which they owed their happiness.



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